



*The reverend, faithfull, and profitable Minister
of Gods word Richard Sibbes, D: D: master
of Katherine Hall in Cambridge, & preacher
of Grayes Inne, London*

Wm Marshall fecit



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K. 1. 1. 1.
A
BREATHING
AFTER GOD.

OR
A CHRISTIANS
DESIRE OF GODS
PRESENCE.

BY

The late Reverent and worthy
Divine RICHARD SIBS,
Doctor in Divinity, Master of
Katherine Hall in Cambridge, and
sometime Preacher of
Grates-Inne.

Pfal. 42 1.

*As the Hart panteth after the water brooks;
so panteth my soule after thee, O God.*

Lam. 3. 56.

Hide not thine eare at my breathing.

LONDON

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THE GREAT THING

OF THE GODS

AND THE GODS

OF THE GODS

OF THE GODS

OF THE GODS

OF THE GODS

OF THE GODS

OF THE GODS

OF THE GODS

OF THE GODS

OF THE GODS





TO THE
CHRISTIAN
READER.

MAN in this
world (espe-
cially since
his defection from
God) standing at a di-
stance from his hap-
pinessse

To the Reader

pinesse in respect of full possession; it is not the least part of his blisse to be happy in expectation. Happiness being by all men desireable, the desire of it is naturally ingrafted in every man, and is the Center of all the searchings of his heart and turnings of his life. But the most of men, like the men of *Sodome* grope and finde not the right dore: onely to a true Christian

stian (by a supernaturall light) is discovered both the right object, and the right way to felicitie. Vpon this discovery, finding himselfe (while hee is here) a stranger to his happinesse hee desires to take leave of this sublunary condition, that he may enjoy him who is *The desire of all Nations.* Hag. 1.7.

Now although God cast common blessings promiscuously
A 5 up-

upon good and bad,
yet hee holds his best
favours at a distance as
Parents doe Cherries
or Apples from their
children, to whet
their appetites the
more after them. And
indeed the best per-
fection of a Christian
in his military condi-
tion is, in desire and
expectation, and it is
enough to him that,
for that he hath Gods
acceptation, who
knowing whercof
we

wce are made, and
how unable to hold
waite in the ballance
of the Sanctuary,
takes his best Gold
with grains of allow-
ance.

The soule of man is
like a Cipher, which is
valued by that which
is set before it: if it wea-
ry it selfe in the desire
of earthly things, like
the Silke-worme; it
finisheth its worke
with its owne de-
struction: but if on
things

things above, when this earthly Tabernacle is turned to Ashes, there shall result a glorious Phoenix for immortality.

There are no Characters better distinguishing a Christian, then those that are inward (hipocrisie like false-work may make a faire shew outward, an hypocrite may performe external works but cannot dissemble
in-

inward affections) and
amongst them, none
better discovers his
temper, then the bea-
ting of the pulse of his
desires, wch this wor-
thy Author (who de-
parted not without
being much desired,
and no lesse lamented)
hath most lively set
forth in the ensuing
Treatise, which a
Christian holding as
a Glasse before him,
may discern whe-
ther hee have life
or

To the Reader.

or no by these breathings.

For the object here propounded, what more desirable then the chiefe good ? for the place, where can it bee more desired, then in his house, where his presence is manifested ? what better end to bee in that house, then to behold God in the beauty of holinesse ? what terme of happinesse better then for ever ? This
was

To the Reader.

was the desire of the
holy Prophet David,
and that it may be thy
desire, is the desire
of

*Thy Christian
Friend,*

H. I.



Imprimatur

Tho. Wykes.





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Vse.

To shew the folly of worldly
men in the neglect of the one
thing



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A



A
BREATHING
after G O D.

PSAL. 27. 4.

*One thing have I desired of
the Lord, that I will seeke
after; that I may dwell
in the house of the Lord all
the dayes of my life; to
behold the beautie of the
Lord, and to enquire in
his Temple.*



His Psalme
is partly a
Prophesie;
it was made
after some
great deliverance out of
B some

Contents
of the former
part
of the
Psalm.

I
David's
comfort.

I
In Gods
goodnes
to him-
selfe.

some great trouble. The
blessed Prophet *David*,
having experience of
Gods goodnesse, sutable
to the trouble hee was
in, in the first part of
this excellent Psalm, he
shewes,

His comfort, and
His courage, and
His care.

His comfort it was al-
together in the Lord,
whom hee sets out in all
the beauties, and excel-
lencie of speech he can;
he propounds the Lord
to him in borrowed
termes, *The Lord is my
light, and my salvation, the
strength*

after GOD.

Strength of my life. So hee
fetcheth comfort from
God, the spring of com-
fort, *the Father of all com-
fort*; hee labours to pre-
sent God to him in the
sweetest manner that
may be, he opposeth him
to every difficulty, and
distresse; In darknesse,
he is *my light*; in danger
he is *my salvation*; in weak-
nesse he is *my strength*; in
all my afflictions, and
streights, he is the *strength
of my life*. Here is the Art
of faith in all perplexi-
ties whatsoever, to be
able to set somewhat in
God, against every mala-
die in our selves. And
this is not simply set out,

B 2 but

3

v. 5:

2 Cor. I. 4.

but likewise with a holy insultation, *The Lord is my light and salvation, whom shall I feare?* It is a question proceeding from a holy insultation, and daring of all other things. *The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?* that is one branch of his comfort.

In the destruction of his enemies who are described.

The second branch, and ground of his comfort, is the goodnesse of God, in the ruine and destruction of his enemies; *when the wicked, even mine enemies, and foes came upon me to eate up my flesh, they stumbled and fell*; he describes his enemies by their malice, and by their ruine: his

After GOD.

his enemies were cruell
enemies, blood-suckers,
eaters of flesh, wee call
them *Canibals* : As in-
deed men that have not
grace, if they have great-
nes, & be opposed, their
greatnesse is inaccessible,
oneman is a Devill to ano-
ther: the Scripture calls
them *Wolves, that leave no-
thing till morning*. As the
great fishes eat up the lit-
tle ones: so great men they
make no more conscience
of eating up other men,
then of eating bread; they
make no more bones of
overthrowing men, and
undoing them, then of ea-
ting bread. *They eat up my
people as they eat bread.*

B 3

But

1
By their
malice.

²
By their
ruine.

But notwithstanding their cruelty, they were overthrowne, saith *David*, *when my foes came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell*: for, indeed, Gods Children, when they are delivered, it is usually with the confusion of their enemies; God doth two things at once, because the speciall grievance of Gods childre it is from inward and outward enemies; he seldome or never delivers them, but with the confusion of their enemies; so he sets downe his owne comfort in the Lord, by the confusion of his enemies. This will be most apparant at
the

the day of Judgement, when Satan, and all that are lead by his spirit, all the malignant Church shall be sent to their own place, and the Church shall be forever free from all kind of enemies. When the Church is most free, then the enemies of the Church are nearest to destruction; like a paire of Ballance, when they are up at the one end, they are downe at the other: so when it is up with the Church downe goe the enemies, so here are the two branches of his comfort.

Now his courage for the time to come, that is

²
Davids
courage.

in the third verse: *Though
an Host incampe against me,
my heart shall not feare: he
puts the case of the grea-
test danger that can be,
though an Host of men
should incompasse me,
my heart should not feare;
though warre rise against
me, in this will I be confi-
dent.* Here is great cou-
rage for the time to come.
*Experience breeds hope and
confidence.* David was not
so couragious a man of
himselfe; but upon expe-
rience of Gods former
comfort and assistance,
his faith brake as fire out
of the smoke, or as the
Sunne out of a cloude:
though I was in such, and
such

such perplexities ; yet
for the time to come, I
have such confidence, and
experience of Gods
goodnesse, that I will
not feare. He that seeth
God, by a spirit of faith
in his greatnesse and
power ; he sees all other
things below, as nothing,
therefore he sayeth here,
he cares not for the time
to come for any opposi-
tion, no, not of an Army.

*If God be with us, who can be
against us ?* Hee saw God
in his power, and then
looking from God to the
creature, alas, who was
he ? as *Michaia*, when he
had seene God sitting
upon his Throne, What

was *Achab* to him, when he had seen God once? so when the Prophet *David* had seene God once, then though an Host incampe against me, I will not feare, &c. Thus you have his comfort in the double branch of it; his courage also, and his confidence for the time to come.

³
His care.

What is his care? that is the next (I will not analyse the Psalme farther then the Text) after his comfort in the Lord, and in the confusion of his enemies, and his courage for the time to come, he sets downe his care, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will*

after GOD.

IF

will I seeke after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the dayes of my life, &c. This was his care; he had so sweet experience of the goodnesse, and power of God being light, and salvation, and strength to him in confounding his enemies; that he studied with himselfe how to be thankfull to God, and this he thought fittest in the open great Congregation; in the Church of God, among many others: therefore hee saith, *one thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seeke after still, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the dayes of my life.*

Now

was *Achab* to him, when he had seen God once? so when the Prophet *David* had seene God once, then though an Host incampe against me, I will not feare, &c. Thus you have his comfort in the double branch of it; his courage also, and his confidence for the time to come.

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Now

Division
of the
Text.

Now in the words of the Text that I have read, there is contained, the holy Prophets care, and desire set downe first in generall, *one thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seeke after.*

And then a specification of that desire he specifies, what is that one thing hee desired, that *I may dwell in the house of the Lord: with the circumstance of time, All the dayes of my life.*

Now after the desire in generall, set out here by the object, in generall; the transcendent object, *one thing have I desired of the Lord: and likewise by the* fre-

frequency, and fervency of the desire, *I will seeke after it still*: I have desired it, and I will not cease: so my desire, it shall not be a flash soone kindled, and soone put out; No, but *one thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seeke still*, I will not be quiet till my desire be accomplished, there is the generall desire, and the degrees of it.

The particular is, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord.

Then the grounds and ends of the particular desire, of dwelling in the house of the Lord,

Because

A BREATHING

Because it is the house of God, there is a strong argument to moove him to dwell in the house of God, it is good dwelling where God dwells, where his Angels dwell, and where his Spirit dwells *in the house of the Lord*, there is one argument that moved him, *I desire to dwell there*, because it is the house of God, which is set out by the extent of time, that *I may dwell in the house of God, all the dayes of my life*, till I be housed in heaven, where I shall need none of these Ordinances that I stand in need of in this world *I desire to dwell in the house of the*

after GOD.

21

the Lord all the dayes of my life.

Then the secondend is,
To behold the beauty of God,
that was one end of his
desire, to dwell in the
house of God; not to feed
his eyes with specula-
tions, and goodly sights:
(as indeed there were in
the Tabernacle goodly
things to be seene,) no;
he had a more spirituall
sight then that; hee saw
the inward spirituall
beauty of those spiri-
tuall things, the other
were but outward things,
as the Apostle calls
them, I desire to dwell
in the house of the
Lord, *to behold the beauty*
of

of the Lord, the inward beauty of the Lord, especially.

And then the third end of his desire is, *That I may enquire in his Temple*, hee desired to dwell in the house of God, because it was the house of God; and to see the beauty of God; the sweet alluring beauty of God, that appeared in his Ordinances: and then his desire was to dwell in the house of God, that hee might enquire more and more, of the meaning of God still, because there is an unfathomed bottome, and an endlesse depth of excellency in divine things, that

that the more wee know,
the more wee may, and
the more wee seeke, the
more we may seeke; they
are beyond our capacity,
they doe not onely satis-
fie, but transcend it,
therefore hee desires still
further and further, to
wade deeper into these
things, *to enquire in Gods
Temple.* Thus yee see the
state of the verse. There is a
general desire propounded
*One thing have I desired of the
Lord, & that wil I seek after.*

And then the desire
specified, *To dwell in the
house of the Lord. And to see
the beauty of the Lord, And
to enquire in his Temple.*
These be the 3. ends.

One

*One thing have I desired
of the Lord, &c.*

To speake first of this
desire, generally pro-
pounded, *One thing have I
desired, &c.*

And then of the in-
crease of it, in that hee
saith, *I will seeke after it
still*, he desired it, and he
would seeke more and
more after it.

In the desire, consider,
First the object, *One
thing.*

And then the desire or
seeking it selfe.

First the object,

One

*One thing.**Quest.*

Was there but one thing for holy *David* to make the object of his desire? was there but one thing needfull? Alas this poor life of ours, it is a life of necessities; how many things are needfull for our bodies? how many things are needfull for the decencie of our condition? how many things need we for our soules? it is a life of necessities; how then doth hee say, *One thing have I desired?* yes; his meaning is, comparatively, I seeke for other things in their order, and
rancke,

Answ.

rancke, and as they may stand with the mayne: but indeed one thing principally; all the rest will follow: *Seeke yee first the Kingdome of God, and all the rest will be cast on you.* The best way to have all other things, is to seeke one thing in the first place. Therefore in heavenly wisdom he saith, I desire *unum unice*, one thing after an entire manner, that I desire more then all things else.

Difference of things in the world.

Hence we may see that, *There is a difference of degrees of things.* God hath established in the world degrees of things; there are some good, & some ill by his

his permission, & of good, there are some that are greater goods, and some lesse, there are spirituall goods, and outward goods; and of spirituall good, there are some that are meanes leading to that which is spiritually good, and some that are spirituall good things in their owne essence, and nature; the leading preparing things, are the meanes of salvation, the Word, and Sacraments, and being in the visible Church; the true spirituall good, it he good that wee get by these things, faith and love, and spirituall inward strength.

Now that there is degrees of things, the Prophet here insinuates when he saith, *One thing have I desired*, that is, of all these variety of things, hee desired the best that includes all in it. God to exercise the wisdom that hee hath given to man, hath planted a difference in the creatures, and hath given a faculty to man, to make a right choise in those differences: and then man makes a right choise, when hee chooseth as God chooseth: Now God makes choise of spirituall things to be the best things, and them he gives to his best friends; he

he knowes they will make us good, and supply all outward wants whatsoever, and sanctifie all estates, and conditions to us; and they are eternall, sutable to the spirituall nature of our soules. God knowes this very well: therefore God hath set spirituall things, as the one only thing: & so the soule when it is made spirituall, and hath the Image of God upon it, it chooseth as God chooseth.

One thing have I desired.

But here it may be asked, why doth he say, *One thing?*

Quest.

thing ? he desired not onely to live neare the Tabernacle; but to heare and see, to have the Word read, and he desired thereupon Grace, and then nearer Communion with God by grace, to have more communion here, and fuller communion in heaven, here is more then one thing.

Answ.

I answer, it is all one, as a chaine that hath many linkes, yet it is but one chaine; so all these are but one. *I desire one thing*; What is that ? To live in the Church of God, to enjoy the Ordinances of God, and they will draw on faith, & feare, &c. the Spirit

Spirit accompanying the Ordinances, it will be a spirit of faith, and repentance, and grace, and by those graces of faith, and the rest that accompany the Ordinances, I shall have nearer communion with God here, and eternall, and everlasting communion with God in heaven, and all these are but one; because they are all linkes of one chaine. Therefore when he saith, *One thing have I desired*, he meanes that one thing that will draw on all other.

That is the scope of a gracious heart, when it attends upon the meanes
 C of

The scope
 of a good
 heart in
 the use of
 Gods Or-
 dinances.

The scope
of a good
heart, in
the use of
Gods Or-
dinances.

of salvation and lives in the Church; not to heare that it may [heare, and there an end, and to read that it may read, to performe it as a taske, and all is done: but to have the worke of the Spirit together with it, to have the Ministry of the Spirit in the Gospell, and the spirit to increase faith, and faith to increase all other graces, and so by grace to grow into nearer communion with God in Christ, that is the scope of every good hearer: therefore hee speakes to purpose, when he saith, *One thing have I desired.*

But

But to speake a little more of the object, why doth he say, *One thing?*

First, it is from the nature of God, wee must have the whole bent, and sway of our soules to him, he will have no halting. The Devill is content with halfe, if we will sinne, because then hee is sure of all; but God will have the whole heart, *My sonne give me thy whole heart, and Thou shalt love the Lord withall thy heart, and withall thy soule; the bent, and sway of the soule must be that way: for it is the nature of excellent things, except we desire them in the chiefe*

The Prophet saith,
One thing have I desired.

2
In respect
of God.

place, they take state upon them, God takes state upon him in this case, hee will not have us serve him and *Mammon*, he will not have the heart divided.

z
In respect
of the
soule.

Then againe, it is from the nature of the soule, therefore hee saith, *One thing*. It is the nature of the soule, when it is upon many things, it can doe nothing well : therefore that I may be religious to purpose, *One thing have I desired*. A streame cut into many channels runs weakely, and is unfit to carry any thing. *Babylon* was so taken. They cut the River into many chan-

channels, and then hee
that tooke it, easily pas-
sed over them. When
the soule is divided into
many channels, to many
things, that it looks af-
ter this thing, and that
thing, and that with ex-
pence and intention of
care, and indeavour.
Alas, where is the desire
of one thing necessary all
the while? For the soule
cannot goe with that
strength as it should ex-
cept it mind one thing:
the soule of man is a fi-
nite thing, therefore ex-
cept it gather its strength,
as a streame that riseth of
many particular lesser
rivers which makes it run

strongly: so the soule it cannot desire one thing as it should, except it bring all other petty streames to it, and make that the mayne desire to be saved in another world, and to have communion and fellowship with God in Christ Jesus, by the Spirit of grace in this world, in the use of the meanes; unlesse this be the maine care, the soule takes no good, when it is so much set on other things.

³
In respect
of grace.

Then thirdly hee sets downe this *One thing*,
(To dwell in the house of God, to grow in grace there, as a Cedar, to be a Tree

Tree planted there) from the very nature of grace, which is to unite things to the mayne; the Spirit of grace sets before the eye of the soule, heavenly spirituall things in their greatnesse, and excellency: and the Spirit of grace, seeing there are many usefull things in this world, it hath an uniting, knitting subordinating power, to rancke all things so, as they may agree to, and helpe the mayne. Grace confines the soule to one thing: man after his fall *sought out many inventions*, saith the Wise man; he was not content

with his condition when he stood, but hee sought out many inventions. When man falls to the creature, he knowes not where to stay; no creature can afford a stay, and rest, for the soule long, the soule is never quiet till it come to God againe, and that is the one thing the soule desireth. The soule being sanctified by the Spirit of God, it subordinates all things to this one thing. *David* desired many things besides this one thing, but not in that degree, but as they might stand with the desire of this one thing necessarie.

Grace

Grace subordinates, and
ranckes all things, so as
that the best things have
the preheminence. There-
fore hee might well say,
One thing, from the dis-
position, that grace hath
to rancke all things to
one. It is a promise in
the Covenant of grace,
saith God, *I will give you
one heart*, as soone as a
man becomes a Chri-
stian, *he hath one heart*, his
heart before was divided,
there was variety of ob-
jects it was set upon, God
had the least piece, the
flesh had a piece, and this
delight, and that delight
had a piece: but saith
God, *I will give you one
C 5 heart*

A BREATHING

heart, that is, a heart uniting it selfe in desire to the best things, and regulating all things, so as all shall be but one, that a man shall use the world as though hee used it not; so as it shall helpe to the maine. As I sayd little streames they helpe the mayne streame running into it, so grace hath a subordinating power over all things in the world, as they may helpe the mayne. *One thing have I desired*, and I desire other things as they may helpe the mayne; Grace will teach us that Art, it hath a speciall Art that way. So wee see both in regard
of

of God, and in regard of the soule being finite, and in respect of the wise disposing of grace that aymes at the mayne, and ranckes all things as they may helpe the mayne, he doth well say, *One thing have I desired.*

This shewes the vanitie, and basenesse of every worldly man, that makes the mayne worke and labour his by-worke, and the by-worke, his mayne worke: that that is the *One thing necessarie*, is set after all. Indeed without grace this is so: The first worke of grace is to set the soule in order, to subdue base affections, to sancti-

Vse
To shew
the vanity
of worldly
men.

A BREATHING

sanctifie the judgement :
 and when it hath set the
 soule in tune, and order,
 then it is fitted to set a
 right price on things, to
 rancke and order them as
 it should. So much shall
 be sufficient to unfold
 the object it selfe in ge-
 nerall,

One thing.

Have I desired.

Now I come to the af-
 fection it selfe, set forth
 here by the degrees.

*One thing have I desired,
 and that I will seeke after.*

I have desired it, and I will desire it still, desires are the issues of the heart: thoughts, and desires are the two primitive issues of the heart : the birthes of the heart. Thoughts breed 'desires ; thoughts in the minde or braine, the braine strikes the heart presently. It goes from the understanding to the will, and affections ; what we thinke of that wee desire , if it be good. ¶ So thoughts and desires , ¶ they immediately spring from the soule. And where they are in any efficacy and strength , they stirre up motion

Thoughts
and desires
the
first issues
of the
heart.

Motion
stirred up
by desire.

motion in the outward man: the desires of the soule, being the inward motion, they stirre up outward motion, till there be an attaining of the thing desired, and then there is rest. Desire to the thing desired, is like *motus ad quietem*, as motion is to rest: when motion comes once to rest it is quiet: so desire which is the inward motion, it stirres up outward motion, till the thing desired be accomplished, and then the soule rests in a loving content, and enjoying of the thing desired.

Now this desire it was

a

a spirituall desire *One thing have I desired of the Lord.* Holy desires they issue from choyce : a holy wise desire (when it is not a meere notion) it ariseth from a choyce of a thing that is good : for desire is nothing but the imbracing , and closing with a thing that is good. The understanding must choose the good first, before the soule imbrace it. The will is but the carriage of the soule, the furthering , and promotion of the soule, to the good things discovered : so it supposeth a choyce of good things.

And choyce supposeth

Holy desires arise
I
From
Christ.

²
Esteeme.

³
Delibe-
rate judg-
ing.

seth an esteeme of the things before we choose them. And that supposeth a deliberate judging, that workes an esteeme. So that it was no hastie sudden thing, this desire, but it rose from the sanctified judgement of *David*, that bred a holy esteeme of these excellent things; the meanes of salvation, having the Spirit of God accompanying of them, containing such excellent comforts, as they doe. I say this desire supposes a right judgement, and thence an esteeme, thence a choyse upon all, choosing these things above
all

all other contentments,
and things in the world
besides. For at this time
he wanted in his family,
the comfort of his wife
and house, &c. Tush,
what doe I regard these
things? if I could enjoy
the sweet, and strong,
and comfortable pre-
sence of God in his Or-
dinances, other things I
could beare well enough,
the want of house, and
wife, and children, the
pleasures, and content-
ments of my Country:
therefore *One thing have I
desired*. It was a desire out
of a high esteeme and
choyse of that one thing
he speakes of.

The

The point of Doctrine
that I will observe in brief,
(because I hasten to the
maine thing) is this, that

Observ.
The spirit
stirres up
holy de-
sires, in
Gods chil-
dren.

*That the spirit of God, in
the hearts of his children, is
effectuall in stirring up holy
desires.*

There is nothing that
charactizeth, and sets a
stampe upon a Christian
so much as desires, All o-
ther things may bee coun-
terfeit, words and actions
may bee counterfeit, but
the desires and affections
cannot, because they are
the immediate issues and
productions of the soule,
they are that that comes
im-

immediately from the Soule, as fire cannot bee counterfeit. A man may aske his desires what heis, according to the pulse of the desires, so is the temper of the man: desires are better then actions a great deale: for a man may doe a good action, that hee doth not love, and he may abstaine from an ill action that he hates not: but God is a Spirit, and lookes to the Spirit especially. It is a good Character of a Christian, that his desire for the most part is to good; the tenour and sway, and bent of his desire is to good. *One thing, have I desired: the spirit of God is ef-*

effectuall in stirring up these desires.

Quest.

But how shall we know that these desires are the chief things to distinguish an Hypocrite from a true Christian, and whether they be true or no.

Ans.

Desires
are true.

^I
By the ob-
ject.

To goe no farther than the Text: desires are holy, and spirituall, if they bee about holy and spirituall things, *One thing have I desired* saith David, what was that? to be rich and great in the World, and to bee revenged on my enemies? No; no, that is not the matter, I have many enemies; GOD will take a course that they shall fall; that that I desire, is to have

have neerer Communion with God, I desire to enjoy the Ordinances of God: so his desire it was set on spirituall objects, and that argued it was a holy desire.

And then againe his desire, it was a fervent desire, as he saith, *one thing have I desired & that wil I seek after.* It was not a blaze or flash, that was soon in, and soon out, it was not a meere velleitie, a kind of inefficacious desire: fervency shewed that his desire was sound, hee would not bee quieted without the thing accomplished.

2
Fervency.

And then Constancy, when a man will not bee taken off, there is not the wickedest

3
Constancy.

wickedest man in the Word, but he hath good flashes, good offers, and desires sometimes; *Lord have Mercy upon me, &c.* he hath good ejaculations sometimes: I but what is the bent and sway of his desires? This was *David's* constant desire: as it was about spirituall, and was a fervent, and eager desire, that he would not bee quiet, so it was constant: that that is naturall is constant, and that that is supernaturally naturall, that that is naturall in spirituall things it is constant, nature is constant. For how doth nature differ from Art? Artificiall things are for a time

time: teach a creature beyond his nature, hee will shew his naturals, so let an Hypocrite act a part, if it be not his nature, he will soone turne to his naturals, and shew that he is an Hypocrite againe. Constancy and perpetuity in good things, a tenour of good desires shew that the heart is good, because it is constant.

And then againe his desire here of *DAVID*, it was kindled from the love of God, and not out of base ends. Holy desires are kindled in the Soule from the love of God: for what saith hee here? *One thing have I desired, what was*

4
From
Gods
Love,

was that? *To dwell in the house of the Lord*, what to doe? *To behold the beauty of God*: to see God in his excellency and beauty, and worthinesse. All his desire was from this, that his soule was enamoured with the beauty of Gods house. The love of God stirred up this blessed desire in the Prophet, therefore it was a holy and spirituall desire.

⁵
Tend to
Gods honour.

Againe, as they spring from the love of God, so they tend to the honour of God: for what comes from heaven, goes to heaven backe againe: As waters that comes from a spring, they goe
as

as high as the place they come from: so holy desires being kindled from heaven, from a Spirit of love, they goe to heaven againe: the love of God stirres them up, and hee seekes Gods glory, and honour, and inward communion with God in this. For a man out of a naturall desire, may desire holy things sometimes, to be free from such or such a sin, and to have such, and such a grace, not out of a desire to honour God: but if he had grace, hee sees he might escape troubles, he might be free from temporall judgements, and hee
D might

might ingraciate himselfe, and commend himselfe to this or that person, whom hee desires to benefit by, therefore hee desires as much grace as may helpe forward his intentions in the world, he joynes the world, and God together : oh no, these are not the desires that distinguish a Christian from another man : but those that spring from the love of God, that proceed inwardly from the truth of the heart, and that the things themselves please God, and that there is a lovelinesse in them, and that they tend to the honour of God,

God especially, and our own good in a secondary place, this is a character of good desires. Thus we see, though I should goe no further then the Text, how we may distinguish holy and heavenly desires, from other desires. *One thing have I desired, and that will I seeke, &c.*

Therefore let us examine what our desires are, what our bent is; desires issue from the Will and affections, and they shew the frame of the soule, more then any thing in the world. As the springs in low places are discovered by the steames, and vapours

To examine our desires.

simile.

that come out of the place: men gather that there is a spring below, because of the ascent of vapours: so the vapouring out of these desires, shew that there is a spring of Grace in the heart, they discover that there is a spring within.

And let those that mourne in *Sion*, that have some evidence, (though they are not so good as they would be:) let them looke to their hearts: what is thy desire? what is the bent of thy soule? when a man is once converted and turned, wherein is his turning? Especially, his minde and judge-

judgement, and esteeme
of things as altered, there
is a change of minde,
and withall the desire, and
bent of the soule is alte-
red: that if a man aske
him, and examine what
the bent is of all the
course of his life, oh that
God might be glorified,
that his Church and
cause might prosper, that
others might be conuer-
ted, this is the bent of
his soule: not that hee
might be great in the
world, and ruine those
that stand in his way,
(this shewes that a man
is a rotten hypocrite)
the bent and sway of the
soule shews what a man is.

Vsing all
meanes
and re-
mooving
all hinder-
rances.

Because I would not have any deceived in the point, take one evidence and signe more with you, and that shall be in stead of all, and it is out of the Text too, *One thing have I desired, and that will I seeke after;* not by prayer onely, but in the use of all meanes: as indeed hee was never quiet, till hee was settled againe in *Sion*; nor then neither, till he had gotten materials for the Temple, and a place for *Gods honour to dwell in*. If desires be not the desires of the sluggard, there will be indeavours: as wee see in the desire of *David* here, *One thing have*

have I desired, and that will
I seeke: he used all meanes
to enjoy communion
with God sweetly.

The *Sluggard lusts and
hath nothing*: so there are
many spirituall slug-
gards that lust, and have
nothing: because they
shew not their desire in
their indeavours: there
will be indeavour, where
the desire is true. For
desire springs from the
Will; the Will being
the appetite of the whole
man, *Voluntas appetitus, &c.*
The understanding car-
ries not, but the Will:
when the Will, will have
a thing, it caryes all the
parts; hereupon when

the desire is true, it stirs up all the powers and faculties to doe their dutie, to seeke to attaine the accomplishment, and possession of that that is desired.

Those therefore, that pretend they have good desires to God, and yet live scandalously, and negligently, and will take no paines with their soules, alas it is the sluggards desire, if they take not paines to remoove all lets, and hindrances: for a man may know the desire of a thing is good, when hee labours to set the hindrances out of the way if hee can; if the
lets

lets and hindrances be not impossible, hee will remove it if hee can. Therefore those that pretend this, and that, (*There is a Lion in the way*) when they might remoove it if they would, there is no true desire: for desire is with the remooving of all possible hindrances of the thing desired.

But to resolve one question. How shall I know whether my desire be strong enough, and ripe enough or no, to give me comfort?

I answer, if the desire of grace be above the desire of any earthly thing, that a man may say with

D 5 David

Quest.

Ans.

How to know good desires are strong.

=

David, One thing have I desired. I desire to be free from sinne, as a greater blessing to my soule, then to be free from any calamity: oh, it is a good signe. And surely a man can never have comfort of his desire, till his desires be raysed to that pitch. For none ever shall come to heaven, that doe not desire the things that tend to heaven, above all earthly things, nor none shall ever escape hell, that doe not thinke it worse, and more terrible then all earthly miseries. God brings no fooles to heaven, that cannot discern the
the

the difference of things.
Therefore let us know,
that our desires are to lit-
tle purpose if wee have
some desire to be good,
&c. but wee have a grea-
ter desire to be rich, and
great in the world, to
have such, and such
place: if the desire of
that be greater, then to
be gracious with God.
If we hate poverty, and
disgrace, and want, and
this and that more then
sinne and hell, to which
sinne leads, it is a signe
that our judgements are
rotten and corrupt, and
that our desire is no pure
spirituall desire: for it
is not answerable to the
| thing

thing desired ; there is no proportion. *David* saith here, *One thing have I desired* : his desire carryed him amaine to *One thing necessary*, above all other things whatsoever. Thus you see out of the Text, what are the distinguishing notes of true desires from those that are false. I need name no more, if we consider what hath beene spoken.

Now for our comfort, if we find these holy desires : oh ! let us take comfort in our selves : for *God will fulfill the desires of them that feare him* : holy desires, they are the birth of Gods Spirit, and there

there is not one of them
that shall be lost: for
God regards those de-
sires, *My groanings are not
hid from thee*; my groan-
ings in trouble: and de-
sires of grace. There is
not the least thing stirred
up in the soule by the
Spirit of God, but it
prevayles with God in
some degree; answerable
to the degree of worth in
it: therefore if wee have
holy desires stirred up by
God, God promotes
those desires, God will
regard his owne worke,
and to him that hath shall
be given. *Lord be mercifull
to thy servants, that desire
to feare thy Name, saith
Ezechias.*

Isay 26. 8.

Ezechias. It is a plea that wee may bring to God, *Lord*, I desire to please thee, as it is, *Isay 26. 8.* *The desire of our soules is to thy Name oh Lord*; Wee faile sometimes, that wee cannot performe actions, with that zeale and earnestnes, as wee should: but the desire, and bent of our soule is to thy Name. A Christian may make it his plea to God, truly our desires are towards thy Name, and wee have some sutable indeavours: and our desires are more that way, then to any thing in the world. It is a good plea, though wee
be

be much hindred, and pulled backe by our corruptions. So much for that, the A& upon this object, *One thing have I desired.*

Of whom doth hee desire it?

Of the Lord.

One thing have I desired of the Lord.

Object of
Davids desire,
God.

It was not a blind desire of the thing, but a desire directed to the right object, to God to fulfill it. Holy desires are such as we are not ashamed of, but dare open them to God himselfe, in prayer,

prayer, and desires to God. A Christian, what he desires as a Christian, he prayes for; and what he prayes for he desires; he is an hypocrite else. If a man pray (as Saint *Austin* in his confessions) that God would free him from temptations, and yet is unwilling to have those loving baits from him, he prayes, but he doth not desire. There are many that pray, they say in their prayers. *Lead us not in temptation;* and yet they run into Temptation; they feed their eyes, and eares, and senses with vaine things: you know what they are well

August.

well enough, their lives are nothing but a satisfying of their lusts, and yet they pray, *Lead us not in temptation.* And there are many persons that desire that, that they dare not pray for, they desire to be so bad. But a Christian what hee desires, he prayes for: *I desire in earnest* to be in the house of the Lord, *I desire it of the Lord*, I put up my request to him; and what I pray to him for, I earnestly desire indeed. Learnie this in a word hence, that,

When wee have holy desires

*Observ.*To turne
desires in-
to prayers.*note.*To keepe
acquain-
tance with
God,*fires stirred up by God, turne
them to prayers.*

A prayer is more then
a desire; it is a desire put
up to God: let us turne
our desires into prayers,
that is the way to have
them speed.

*One thing have I desired
of the Lord.*

The reason why wee
should in all our desires,
make our desires knowne
to God, is, to keepe our
acquaintance continual-
ly with God. Wee have
continuell use of desires
of grace, and desires of
mor-

mortification of corrup-
tions, and of freedome
from this, and that evill
that is upon us : as ma-
ny desires as we have, let
them be so many prayers,
turne our desires into
prayers to God, and so
maintaine our acquain-
tance with God. And we
shall never come from
God without a blessing
and comfort : hee never
sends any out of his pre-
sence empty, that come
with a gracious heart,
that know what they de-
fire. And it brings peace
with it, when wee make
our desires knowne to
God by our prayer, It
brings peace that passeth
under-

Ephes. 4.

understanding; Ephes. 4.
 Put case God doth not
 heare our request, that
 he doth not grant what
 we aske? *The peace of God*
which passeth understand-
ing, shall keepe your hearts
and minds: So that when
 we put up our requests to
 God with thankfulness
 for that wee have recei-
 ved, the soule will finde
 peace: Therefore I say,
 let us turne all our de-
 sires into prayers, to
 maintain perpetuall com-
 munion, and acquaint-
 tance with God: oh! it
 is a gainefull and com-
 fortable acquaintance.

Note of a
 good con-
 science,

It is an argument, and
 signe of a good consci-
 ence,

ence, for a man to goe oft to God with his desires; it is a signe that he is not in a wicked course: for then he dares not appeale to the presence of God. Sore eyes cannot endure the light: and a galled conscience cannot endure Gods presence. Therefore it is good to come oft into the presence of God: it shewes that the heart doth not regard iniquity. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not heare my prayers.* It is an argument of a good conscience to come oft into the presence of God: but I will not enter in-
to

to the common place of prayer.

Wee see next his earnestnesse *I have desired it of the Lord, and*

I will seeke after it.

Dauids importunity.

I will follow God still. Here is his importunity in prayer, his fervency, his uncessancy and perseverance, (as the Apostle exhorts,) hee persevered in prayer. *I will seeke after it.* In prayer, and in the use of all good means, I will doe what I can. So you see one qualification of prayer, it must be with perseverance, and importunity.
God

Observ.
Perseverance, and importunity requisite in prayer.

God loves importunate suitors: though wee cannot endure to be troubled with such persons, yet God loves importunate suitors.

As wee see in *Luke 18.* *Luke 18.*
in the Parable of the Widow. God there vouchsafes to compare himselfe to an unrighteous Judge, that *cared neither for God, nor man*: yet the importunity of the Widow moved him to regard her. So the poore Church of God, shee is like a Widow, with her hayre hanging about her. *This is Sion, whom none regardeth*: yet this Widow, the poore Church
of

A BREATHING

of God, and every particular member of it, they are importunate with the Judge of heaven, and earth, with God, and will not he more regard the importunity of his children whom he loves, and delights in that *Call upon him day and night*? will not he regard their petitions; when an unrighteous Judge shall care for the importunity of a poore Widow? Thus you see the excellent fruit of importunity in our blessed Saviour himsele, and here in *David, I will seeke after it, I will have no nay.* Therefore wee are exhorted in the Scriptures,

tures, not to keep silence,
to give God no rest, you
that are the Lords remem-
brancers, keepe not silence,
give him no rest: as Iacob
with the Angell, wrestle
with him, leave him not
till wee have a blessing.

As the woman of *Canaan*,
let us follow him still,
and take no nay. Oh this
is a blessed violence (be-
loved) when wee can set
upon God, and will have
no nay, but renew suite
upon suite, and desire on
desire, and never leave till
our petitions be answered.
Can the hypocrite pray
alway? Would you know
a comfortable note to
distinguish an hypocrite

E from

Note.

from a true Christian; take it hence, *will the hypocrite pray alway?* Sometimes he will pray; but if God answer him not presently he gives over; but Gods children pray alwayes; if the ground be good, if they see the excellency of the thing, and the necessity, and withall joyne at the amiablenesse of it, that it may be gotten. When they see the excellency, and the necessity and usefulness of the thing, and the attainablenesse of it, and that it is attainable in the use of meanes, they need no more, they will never give over. That is the
reason

reason of that in the petitions, *Thy Kingdome come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* But can wee doe the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven? and doth Gods glorious Kingdome of heaven come while wee are here in earth? No, it doth not, but the Soule that is guided with the spirit of prayer, it rests not in this or that degree, but prayes till it be in heaven, *Thy Kingdome come*, I have grace now, but I desire glory, *Thy will be done*, I desire to doe it as thy Saints in heaven; though I cannot doe it: but I desire, and I will not give

God rest, but pray, till all my prayers be answered in heaven; and then I shall doe the will of God as it is done in heaven indeed. Thus we ought eagerly, and constantly to persevere in our desires, till they be fully satisfied, or else wee are but hypocrites.

Let us make conscience I beseech you of this duty more then wee have done, and never give God over for grace, for strength against our corruptions; for his Church: for the prosperity of the meanes of salvation: for those things that we have ground for;
let

let us never give him over till we see hee hath answered our desires. And when he hath answered our desires, let us goe on still to desire more: for this life is a life of desires, the life of accomplishment is heaven, then all our desires shall be accomplished, and all promises performed, and not before then. This is a life of desires, and we must be in a state of desires, and prayers still till we be in heaven.

What is the reason that God doth not presently accomplish our desires?

Quest.

There be diverse reasons.

Ans.

Ans^w.

God doth
not answer
our desires
presently.

¹
God loves
to heare
our pray-
ers.

sons. First of all he loves to heare the desires of his servants, hee loves to be sued unto : because hee knowes it is for our good. It is Musicke that best pleaseth Gods eares to heare a soule come to him to request, especially spirituall things of him which hee delights most to give, which hee knowes is most usefull, and best for us : this pleaseth him so marvellously, that he will not presently grant it, but leads us along, and along, that still he may heare more, and more from us.

²
To keepe
us hum-
ble.

And then to keepe us
in a perpetuall humble
sub-

subjection, and dependance on him, hee grants not all at once, but leads us along, by yeelding a little, and a little, that so hee may keepe us in a humble dependance.

And then to exercise all our graces : for a spirit of prayer is a spirit of exercise of all grace, wee cannot pray, but we must exercise faith, and love to God and his Church, and a sanctified judgement to esteeme what are the best things to be prayed for : and to exercise mortification, *If I regard sinne, God will not regard my prayers.* A spirit of prayer is a spirit that

³
To exercise our
graces.

puts all into exercise: therefore God, to keepe us in the exercise of all grace answeres not at the first.

⁴
To praise
Gods blessings.

And then hee would have us to set a high price upon what wee desire, and seeke after; if we had it at the first, we should not set so high an esteeme and price of it.

⁵
To use
them better.

And then that, wee might better use it when we have it: then wee use things as wee should doe when wee have gotten them with much adoe, when we have won them from God with great importunity, then we keepe and preserve them as wee should.

should. These, & the like reasons may be given, & you may easily conceive them yourselves. Therefore let us not be offended with Gods gracious dispensation if he answer not our desires presently, but pray still: and if wee have the spirit of prayer continued to us, that spirit of prayer is better then the thing wee beg a great deale. Oft-times God answers us in a better kind, when he gives us a spirit of prayer: for increasing a spirit of prayer in us, he increaseth all graces in us; what is it we would have? This or that particular grace, but

E 5 when

A spirit of
prayer
better
then par-
ticular
things.

when God gives us a spirit of prayer, he answers us better then in the thing we aske, for there is all grace. He will answer in one kind or other. But I will not be large in these points : you see then what was the affection of the holy Prophet, to that one thing. *One thing have I desired.* And he did not onely desire it, but turned his desire into a prayer, hee prayed to God, and hee not onely prayed once or twice, but hee seekes it still, till God vouchsafed to grant it.

Object.

Well, but that that he prayed for, hee was assured

red of, and therefore what need hee pray for it? hee had a promise, *Psalme 23. 5, 6. Hee shall prepare a Table before mine enemies, my Cup doth overflow.* But what is that to this? these be things of this life? Oh! but saith he, God will be good to me in the things of another life, and all the dayes of my life too: Doubtlesse the loving kindnesse of the Lord shall follow me all the dayes of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord: hee takes in trust his dwelling in the house of God, and that the loving kindnesse of God should follow him all the

*Psal. 23. 5.
6.*

the dayes of his life, hee was assured of it, and yet here hee seekes it, and prayes for it.

Ans.

Assurance
of that we
pray for,
no hinder-
ance to
prayer,
Dan. 9.

I note it, to shew that the assurance of the thing takes not away the earnestnesse of prayer. *Daniel* was assured *Dan. 9.* That God would deliver the Jewes out of *Babylon*: he had read *Jeremies* Prophecies, he knew the time was accomplished; yet we see what an earnest prayer hee makes there. Christ knew that God heard him in all his desires, that he should have all good from God, being his onely Sonne, yet he prayed whole nights some-

sometimes, and a whole Chapter *Ioh. 17.* is an excellent prayer of his: so that the assurance of the thing, takes not away prayer to God: nay it stablisheth it, for God so makes good his promises for the time to come, as that hee makes them good this way, hee will be sought to by prayer. And I may know hence that hee will make good his promises for the time to come to me, if I have a spirit of prayer for them: if I pray for perseverance to the end, that God would vouchsafe me grace to live in the Church, and to grow

up

Ioh. 17.

up as a Cedar; God surely meanes to grant this, because hee hath given me holy, and gracious desires, which he would not have given me, but that hee meanes to give the thing. For this is an encouragement to pray, when I know I shall not loose my labour, I pray, because I have a promise to have it, and I know the promise runnes upon this; *But I will be sought unto of the house of Judah for this, Ezek. 36.* For if wee have it, and have not sought it by prayer, for the most part we cannot have a comfortable use of it, unlesse we have

Ezech. 36.

have things as the fruite
of our prayers : though
there be not a particular
prayer for every particu-
lar thing we have of God:
yet unlesse it be the fruit
of the generall prayer,
that wee put up daily, we
cannot have comfort in
it : if God give it by a
generall providence as he
fills *the bellies of the wicked
with good things.* But if
we will have things for
our good in particular,
we must receive them as
the fruite of our prayers
from God , you see
here he seekes, and de-
sires that that hee had
a promise to have, *one
thing have I desired of the
Lord,*

Lord, and that will I seeke.

*That I may dwell in the
House of the Lord.*

Specifica-
tion of
Davids de-
fire.

It was generally pro-
pounded before, *One
thing have I desired, and
that will I seeke after, with
all my might, and what
is that? the specification
of it is this,*

To dwell
in the
House of
God.

*That I may dwell in the
House of the Lord for ever.*

His desire is, not only
to be in Gods house, but
to dwell in it, to abide;
and not for a little while,
but to dwell, and to dwell
all the dayes of my life.

The

The House of God then was the Tabernacle, the Sanctuary, the Temple was not yet built : he desired to be neare the Tabernacle, to dwell in the Sanctuary, the place of Gods worship. In the Tabernacle, which in those times was the House of God, there was the Arke, and the mercy-seate, types of many glorious things in the new Testament, the *Holy of holies, &c.* And hee desired to dwell in the Tabernacle, to be neare the Arke, the House of God, why ? because God manifested his presence there, more then in other places. The
Arke

Arke hath Gods name in diverse places of Scripture ; because God gave his answers in the Arke, in the Propitiatory , or Mercie-seate , they came there to know his meaning , what hee would have ; he gave his answers there. He is said to dwell betweene the *Cherubins* : there were two *Cherubins* upon the Mercy-seate, and God is said to dwell betweene *the Cherubins* : that is , there he was present to give answers to the high Priest , when hee came to aske. *David* knew this well enough, that God had vouchsafed a more speciall presence

sence in the Tabernacle,
then in all the places of
the world, and therefore
saith he, *I desire to dwell in
the house of the Lord all the
dayes of my life.*

House, we take for the
persons that are in it, and
persons that are ordered,
or else it is a confusion,
and not a house, it is a
company of those that
are voluntary, they come,
not by chance into our
house, those that are
members of our Society:
but there is an order,
there is a governour in a
house, and some that are
under government, and
there is a voluntary con-
junction, and combina-
tion.

House
what.

tion. So the Church is a voluntary company of people that is orderly, some to teach, and some to be instructed, and thereupon it is called a house.

House of
God,

And it is called the House of God, because he is present there, as a man delights to be present in his house. It is the place where God will be met withall. As a man will be found in his house, and there hee will have suitors come to him, where hee reveales his secrets; A man rests, hee lyes, and lodgeth in his house; where is a man so familiar as in his house?
And

And what other place hath he such care to protect, and provide for as his house? And he layes up his treasures, and his jewels in his house: so God layes up all the treasures of grace and comfort in the visible Church. In the Church hee is to be spoken with as a man is in his house; there hee gives us sweet meetings; there are mutuall spirituall kisses. *Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth, Cant. 1.* A mans house is his Castle as we say, that hee will protect and provide for. God will be sure to protect, and provide for his Church.

Cant. 1.

Church. Therefore hee calls the Church of God, that is, the Tabernacle (that was the Church at that time) the house of God. If wee apply it to our times, that that answers the Tabernacle now, is particular visible Churches under particular Pastors, where the meanes of salvation are set up, particular visible Churches now are Gods Tabernacle. The Church of the Jewes was a Nationall Church: there was but one Church, but one place, and one Tabernacle: but now God hath erected particular Tabernacles, every particular

cular Church & Congregation under one Pastor, their meeting is the Church of God, a severall Church independant. Our Nationall Church, that is, the Church of *England*: because it is under a government Civill, which is not dependant upon any other forraine Prince, it is a particular Church from other nations.

In that God calls the Church his House, it shewes the speciall respect that hee hath to his Church. God though he be present every where, yet he is present in another manner in his Church.

Gods respect to his Church.

Simile.

Church. As for instance, the soule is present in all the parts of the body: but the soule as farre as it understands, is onely in the braine, as farre as it is the fountaine of life, it is in the heart: it hath offices, and functions in all the parts: but in the speciall function, the rationall function of it, as it discourseth, and reasoneth, it is in the braine: so (for our apprehension sake) God is every where: but as hee sanctifies, and poures out his blessings, and opens, and manifests his secrets, so he is in his Church especially. God is every where, but hee is
in

in another way in heaven
then in other places, hee
is there gloriously : so in
earth hee is every where,
but he is in another man-
ner in the Church, (the
heaven upon earth) then
in other places, hee is
there as in his house to
protect them, & provide
for them, as his family,
and there hee abides by
his Ordinances, and takes
solace, and delight; God
delights himsele in his
Church, and Children,
that attend upon his Or-
dinances; where *Two or
three are met together, I
will bee in the midst of
them.* When Gods peo-
ple meet together in the
F Church,

Church, God is present among them. So you see in what respect, the Tabernacle then, and particular Churches now (which answer it) are called the House of God.

To carrie
our selves
decently,
in Gods
House,

Let us learne this for our duty as well as consider our comfort, in that the Church is the House of God, let us carry our selves as wee should, decently in the house of God. Those that are to looke to the house of God, they should purge out all uncleane corners, that God may delight to dwell in his House still, that we give him no cause to depart out of his House.

House. That I may——

*Dwell in the house of the
Lord, &c.*

The act here is, that I
*may dwell in the house of the
Lord.* Hee did not desire
to be in it for a day or a
little time, to salute it,
and so to leave it : but to
*dwell in the House of the
Lord,* and to dwell there
for ever. You see here
that **Christians** have a
constant love to the best
things, a constant desire
to dwell in the house of
God. You may thinke
it a strange desire of this
holy man to dwell in the
House of God : but

Love of
Gods chil-
dren to
good
things
constant,

thinke then of the continuednesse of his desire, it was even to heaven it selfe, he desired to dwell in the House of God for ever.

David desired to dwell,

¹
In Gods love to him,

For what end ?

I desire to dwell in the House of God, that I may dwell in the love of God, and in the care of God to me in Christ for ever. I doe not desire to dwell in the House of God, as it is a meeting, and there an end: but I desire to dwell in the House of God, that I may dwell in the love and care of God, and not onely

²
In his love to God.

onely dwell in his care
and love to me, and his
care and esteeme of me,
but that I may dwell in
my love to him, that I
may *abide in his love*, and
faith in him, that I may
abide in *Christ*. It is not
onely for a man to abide
in the House of God, and
goe no further then so,
but to abide in the love
of God, and in our love,
and care, and faith, and
dependance upon him,
to make God our house
to live, and walke, and
abide in, *to dwell in God*,
as Saint *Iohn* saith, not
onely in the House of
God, but God himselfe.
And the upshot of all his
F 3 desire

desire, was to abide in heaven for ever. The desires of Gods people never rest, till they come to their proper center, and there they are quiet: there is a rest of all desires in heaven: as fire, it never rests till it come to its Element above, and heavy bodies rest not till they come to the center below: so holy desires that are the motion of the soule, they rest not till they come to the center, the place of rest. So we must conceive of *Dauids* desire to dwell in the House of the Lord, to dwell in the care, and love, and protection of God.

God forever, to dwell in love, and faith, and dependance, and in the whole streame of my soule for ever while I live; and then abide in heaven, where there are pleasures for ever-more, as hee saith in another place.

Therefore when wee have any thoughts and desires, while we are here below, of grace and comfort, &c. Let us extend, and stretch our desires to the last, to heaven it selfe, where all desires shall be accomplished, where all promises shall have their full performance. It is a poore thing onely to

To extend
our desires
to heaven.

desire to live in the Church Militant, and there is an end: No, here is the comfort of Gods people, that in their prayers and desires, and their indeavours sutable to their prayers, and desires, they all lead them to heaven, and there they have their full accomplishment, they have a constant desire to dwell in the House of God.

1
Because
the soule
is not sa-
tisfied
here.

The reason is, because the soule in this world is never fully satisfied with the good things of Gods House, till it be in heaven. This life is a life of desires and longing: the Church is but contracted

tracted to *Christ* in this world, the marriage shall be consummate in another world, therefore the Church desires still further and further communion with *Christ* in his Ordinances here, and for ever in heaven.

And then there are remainders of corruptions still, that dead and dull our performances, and put us on to actions that grieve our spirits; and the Spirit of God: to this end, that wee may have a perpetuall supply of the Spirit, we desire to dwell in the House of the Lord, because there is corrup-

2
Corruptions in-
force it.

3
There is
more to
be attain-
ed still.

tion in us still, till grace hath wrought it out fully. There is more and more to be had still in the House of God, we never come to be full; the soule it is wondrous capable, being a spirituall essence, it is capable of more grace and comfort then we can have in this world: therefore wee pray, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* A Christian desires to dwell in the House of the Lord here, till hee come to dwell in heaven, till he be translated from the Temple here, to the Temple in heaven. In *Ephes. 4.* God hath ordained

Ephes. 4.

dained a ministry to the edification of the Church, not onely to constitute the Church, as some thinke and say, that preaching must constitute a Church, and after praying must edifie it: oh! let both goe together, *God gave gifts to men*, to preach, to edifie the Church more and more; so long as there is use of building more and more; so long there is need of the Ministry; therefore hee desired to dwell in the House of the Lord.

But the especiall reason why he desired it, was because hee knew God
was

⁴
For Gods
presence.

3
There is
more to
be attain-
ed still.

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But the especiall reason why he desired it, was because hee knew God
was

4
For Gods
presence.

was alway present in his owne House, and there is no good thing can be wanting where God is present, it is the presence of God that makes all things sweet and comfortable; what makes heaven to be heaven, but because God is there? If the soule of a Christian were among Angels, angelicall comforts would not be desired, if God were not there: if there were all the delights in the world, it would not care for them, except God were present, heaven were not heaven without the presence of God. The presence of God in

a Dungeon, in a Lions Den, makes it a Paradise, a place of pleasure; the presence of God makes all conditions comfortable. If there be not the presence of God, the greatest comfort in the world is nothing: what makes the Church esteemed of by holy men? God is present there; and where-soever God is present, in the communion of Saints, especially in his Ordinances, wee should esteeme them by this, that God is present. What makes hell to be hell? there is no presence of God there, no testimony of his presence in hell,

hell, nothing but *utter darknesse*. What makes the life of man comfortable? there is some presence of God in every thing, there is a presence of God in meat, in drink, in friends, that a man may say, oh here is a good God, here is some presence of God. There is not the vilest reprobate in the world, but he hath some testimony of Gods presence, he tastes of God in somewhat or other, though hee see not God in it (but like a beast is drowned in the use of the creature) yet God shewes himselfe to him in some comfort: but when God shall

shall remoove all his presence from a man, that is hell it selfe. What is hell? but where there is no presence of God, when there is no communion with the chiefe good, that the fountaine of good is remooved, a man is in darknesse, and horror, that is hell, as wee see in *Dives*. It is the presence of God that makes things comfortable, that is heaven to enjoy nearer and nearer communion with God.

Therefore let us labour to enjoy the presence of God in his Ordinances, that we may have a heaven upon earth, that wee may desire

desire still more and more to delight in them, till wee come to heaven, where all desires shall be accomplished, and there shall be no more desire. *David* knowing that God was present in his Church, hee saith, *Oh that I might dwell in the House of God all the dayes of my life.*

See the constant disposition of Gods children hence. It is a torment to carnall men to watch one houre with *Christ*: *Could you not watch with me one houre?* saith he to his Disciples. It is a torment to give God the hearing; to sanctifie the Lords day, alas it cannot stand with

with their carnall dispositions : but Gods people long, and have a longing desire, *One thing have I desired, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord.* Men that have not depth of grace, they are like Comets, they blaze for a time : but when they are not fed with vapours from below, there is a disparition not long after, but fixed Starres are alway in the firmament, they never vary ; so a true Christian is as a fixed Starre, hee is fixed in the Firmament, in his desire ; *One thing have I desired, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the dayes*

*dayes of my life; and God
seconds his desire, and
saith Amen to it; as I shall
have occasion to presse
after, in the use in the lat-
ter part of the verse. That
I may dwell in the house of
the Lord.*

*To behold the beautie of
the Lord.*

This was another
ground of the eager, con-
stant, unsatisfied desire,
*To dwell in the House of the
Lord, That he might see
the beautie of the Lord, or
the delight, the sweet-
nesse of God: beauty is
too particular a word to
expresse the fulnesse of
the*

the Holy-ghost; the pleasantnesse or the delight of God; take the word in a generall sense, in your apprehensions, it may be the object of all senses, inward, and outward: delight is most transcendant for pleasantnesse: for indeed God in his Ordinances, is not onely beauty to the eye of the soule, but is oyntment to the smell, and sweetnesse to the taste, and all in all, to all the powers of the soule. God in *Christ* is, therefore hee is delightfull and sweet. *That I may see the beauty of the Lord.*

In this clause here
are

are discovered these two things,

*The Object, and
The act.*

There are these two points. That God is beautifull, and this is seene in his Ordinances, and in his Church, especially, to see the beauty of Gods House. And it is the happinelle of a Christian, (& he esteems it so by the Spirit of God) to see, and to be partaker of this beauty of God; sight is put for the more full enjoying, one sence put for another, as indeed sight is taken for all the senses,

senses, inward and outward. It is no benefit to us, though there be beauty, if we have not eyes to see it, all is lost, therefore hee desired to dwell in the House of the Lord, that he might *see the beauty of the Lord.*

Now, concerning the beauty of God, I will not speake of it at large, or singly of the excellencies of God. The Text aymes especially at the beauty of God, as discovered in his Ordinances, in his Church. A man may speake gloriously, and largely of the beauty of God, of his excellency. That his wisdom is won-

Observ.

God is
beautifull.

wondrous excellent, and beautifull, that is seene in the ordering of things, and his power is wonderfull beautifull, and his mercy, &c. All this is true, but what is all to us, though God be never so beautifull in himselfe, if he be not beautifull to us in *Christ*, and in his Church? therefore wee will come to that that the holy Prophet here aymes at, *The beautie of the Lord*, that is, God is especially beautifull in his Church, in his Ordinances, and that was the ground of his desire, *Omne pulchrum est amabile*, every beautifull thing is an

Especially
in his
Church.

an attractive of love. It is no wonder hee desired to dwell in the House of the Lord, because there was the beauty of the Lord, and the most excellent beauty of all.

The beauty of the Lord is especially the amiable things of God, which is his mercy, and love, that makes all other things beautifull, that is in the Church.

What makes his power sweet to his children? and his Justice, in confounding their enemies, and giving rewards? and his Wisedome sweet, in reconciling Justice and Mercy together wisely
in

Godsmercy makes all beautifull.

Exod. 34.

in *Christ*? All that makes this so lovely, is his grace and love, that set his *Wisedome* on worke, to devise a way to reconcile Justice and Mercy by *Christ Emmanuel*, God, and man. So, that that is most beautifull in God is grace: as you have it *Exod 34.* when *Moses* desired to see the glory of God, how doth God describe himselfe to *Moses*? *Iehovah*, *Iehovah strong, gracious, mercifull, long suffering, full of kindnesse.* So that if wee would see the glory of God, it appears most in grace, and mercy, and loving kindnesse, and such sweet Attributes.

after GOD.

121

7:

butes. This makes all things in God amiable: for now we can thinke of his Justice, and not feare, it is fully satisfied in *Christ*; wee can thinke of his power with comfort, it serves for our good to subdue all our enemies: there is no Attribute, though it be terrible in it selfe, but it is sweet and amiable, because God lookes graciously on us in his beloved.

Now this grace and love, and mercy of God shines to us in the face of *Christ* as beloved, as I have shewed out of that Text 2 Cor. 3. 18.

G

We

This mercy of God
in *Christ*.

2 Cor 3. 18.

wee all behold the glory of
God as in a glasse, that is,
wee behold the love of
God in *Iesus Christ*, in the
mirrour of the Gospell;
we must take God, not
as considered abstractively,
and simply, but God
in *Christ*: for other notions
of God are terrible.
God will not otherwise
be seene by the eye of the
soule, nor otherwise
knowne then in *Christ*.
Now God in the *Messias*
is very delightfull in his
House. This beautilous
grace of God shines in
the face of *Iesus Christ*.
For God is so gracious
and mercifull, as that his
Justice must be fully satisfied.

tisfied, that is onely in *Christ*; that being satisfi-
fied, God in *Christ* looks
on us with a gracious
looke. So that God is
beautifull, now in regard
of his mercy and grace,
as it is revealed in *Iesus
Christ*, as he looks upon
us in the face of his be-
loved Sonne. There are
two objects of religious
worship: God the Fa-
ther, Sonne and Holy-
Ghost, and *Christ* Media-
tor. The beauty of both
is wondrous in the
Church, wondrous to-
wards the Church of
God, & it is most appa-
rant in the Ordinances of
God in the Church.

The ob-
jects of
worship.

Christ
beautifull.

Christ is altogether lovely. Christ in whom God is a Father, and reconciled to us, and now wee can sweetly thinke of, Hee is altogether lovely. The chiefe of tenne thousand. The Church sets him out there particularly, his head, his armes, his breasts, his eyes, his lips drop Myrrhe. She singles out every excellency of Christ, and dwells upon it in her meditation, and summes up all together, Christ is lovely. What makes beauty but a mixture of diverse colours? as we say white and red mixed together sweetly. Now to see Justice and Mercy

mercy in *Christ* so sweetly mixed, what an excellent beautie it makes? to see the Justice of God fully satisfied, that his mercy might runne a maine to us now. Here is a sea indeed if wee should enter into it, to see the love of God which is the most beautifull, and amiable grace of all; the love of God in *Christ*, and the love of *Christ* towards us.

Christ was never more lovely to his Church, then when he was most deformed for his Church; *There was no forme nor beautie in him*, when hee hung upon the Crosse: Oh!

G 3 there

Christ
lovely in
his greatest
abasement.

there was a beauty to a guilty soule, to see his surety induring the wrath of God; overcoming all his enemies, and nailing the Law to his Crosse. And that should indeare Christ to us above all things: hee should be the dearer to us, the more vile and base he was made for us, and hee should be most lovely in our eyes, when he was least lovely in his owne, and when he was deformed, when our sinnes were upon him: we should consider those times especially. The world is most offended at that, that a Christian most joyes in: God forbid

bid that I should joy in any thing but in the Crosse of Christ, saith Saint Paul; so wee should joy in, and love that especially in Christ.

Now this love of God in *Christ*, and this love of *Christ* is exprest to us in the Scriptures at large, it is published by the Ministry, sealed by the Sacrament. It is too large an argument for me to wade into, I need but only give you a touch, and taste of it.

Now, that that makes the house of God so beautifull then, is the love of God, and the love of *Christ* shewed and ma-

Presence
of God
beautifull,

nifested, and the presence of God, of Christ, and of the Holy-Ghost in the Church; take it for the persons; God the Father, as he hath revealed himselfe a Father in *Christ*, he is among the people of God in the Church, and there is God the Sonne, and the Holy-Ghost, dispensing graces, and comforts there. It is the presence of the King that makes the Court, and it is the presence of God in the Church, that makes it so glorious, and so excellent as it is : *Glorious things are spoken of thee thou Citie of God*

The Church likewise
is

after GOD.

129

The
Church
beautifull
in regard
of Angels.

is beautifull in regard of the Angels that are alway attending in our assemblies, and see how we carrie our selves. Here is not onely the Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost distributing grace, and mercy, but likewise the blessed Angels, as pure Instruments are in our Assemblies. Therefore in the Curtaines, in the Hangings of the Arke, there were pictures of Cherubins, to shew that the Angels attend about the Church, especially the Church gather'd together: for God more respects the Church gathered together then any severall

G 5 member.

member, we are all Temples severally, but especially the Church is the Temple when it is met together. Now by the Cherubins in the Curtaines of the Tabernacle, was set forth the Angels attendance upon the Church ; they are servants to doe good to the Church : and they are fellow students with us, they studie the mysteries of salvation, the beauty of God, the wonderfull transcendent love, and grace, and mercy of God to his Church ; as it is in

1 Pet. 1. The Angels prier into the mysteries of salvation, they are students with

1 Pet. 1.

with us of these blessed mysteries. Some thing is revealed to them, some grace and mercy to the Church, that they knew not before experimentally.

And it is beautifull likewise in regard of the Church it selfe; the people of God themselves are beautiful: for order is beautifull. Now it is an orderly thing to see many together to submit themselves to the Ordinance of God. *The glory of a King is in the multitude of subjects*: and it is a glorious thing for God to have many subjects meekly meeting together to attend

In regard
of it selfe.

attend his pleasure. An Army is a beautifull thing, because of the order, and of the well disposed ranckes that are within it, in this regard the Church is beautifull.

In regard
of the Or-
dinances.

That which makes the house of God beautifull more especially, is the meanes of salvation, not onely Gods presence, but the meanes, solemne and publike prayer, the word and Sacraments, and likewise the government, that should be in purging the Church, all make the Church of God beautiful and lovely. All the Ordinances of God in the Church

Church of God, have a delight in them to spirituall senses.

As for the Ordinance of the word, it is wondrous delightfull, *sweeter then the hony combe*, especially the Ordinance unfolding the Word, the Word as it is preached, which is the *opening of the box*. A box of sweet oymment, if it be not opened it casts not a sweet favour all the house over; but when the boxe is opened, the favour comes over all the house: so the publishing of the Word in the Ordinance, is the opening of the boxe; the lifting up of the brazen Serpent.

I
The word
preached.

pent. If the Serpent were lift up for the wounded person, he could not behold it : Now *Christ* is lift up in the Ordinance, every wounded soule may look to *Christ*. The preaching of the Word, is the lifting up of the Banner of *Christ*s love, as it is in the Canticles, *Christ*s love as a Banner drawes all after him : when the beautie of *Christ* is unfolded, it drawes the wounded hungry soule unto him. The preaching of the Word doth that that shewes the sweet love of God in *Iesus Christ* : this makes the Ordinance of the Ministry so sweet. The Ordinance

dinance of the Ministry is, that that distributes the portion to every Child of God, the Ministers of God are Stewards as it were to distribute comfort, and reproofe to whom it belongs; now where there is a convenient distributing of the portion to every one that makes the Ordinance of God so beautifull, when the waters of life are derived from the spring of the Scriptures to every particular mans use. The word in the application of it is a sweet thing: for good things, the nearer they are brought home, the more delight.

delightfull they are. This Ordinance of Preaching, it layes open the *riches of Christ*. There may be a great deale of riches wrapped up in a treasury, but this opens the treasury, as Saint Paul saith, *to lay open the unsearchable riches of Christ*. The Ministry of the Word is ordained to lay open the treasure to Gods people, that they may know what riches they have by *Christ*: and the end of the Ministry is to win the peoples love to *Christ*; therefore they come betweene, the Bride and Bride-groome, to procure the Marriage; therefore they lay open that,

that, that procures the Contract here, and the consummation in heaven; so to wooe for *Christ*, and beseech them to be reconciled to God. This is the end of the Ministry, this makes the Church of God so beautifull, that it hath this Ordinance in it, to bring God, and *Christ*, and his people together, to contract them together. There be rich mines in the Scripture, but they must be digged up, the Ministry seives to digge up those mines. God hath therefore set a part this calling of the Ministerie, to shew what belongs to Gods people.

Thus

²
The Sa-
crament.

Thus you see in this respect, of the Ordinance of the Ministerie, God is beautifull in his house.

Then likewise for the other Ordinance, the Sacrament it is a sweet, and delightfull thing, there is a wondrous beauty in the Sacrament: for therein we taste the love of God, and the love of *Christ*, that they would condescend so low, as to seale our faith with the Sacrament, to helpe our soules by our bodies, by outward things; to help our soules by that, that feeds our bodies, to teach us what feeds our soules, namely the death of *Christ*, as
satisf.

satisfying divine Justice,
the thinking, and dige-
sting of this is wondrous
comfortable as any food
is to the body, and in-
comparably more sweet;
considering our conti-
nuall necessity to relish
that spirituall food, and
our daily finnes, and
breaches, that enforce a
daily necessity to relish
Christ. That God should
appoint such a meanes,
that he should in the Sa-
crament feed us with his
owne body, and blood.
He thought he could not
manifest his love enough,
unlesse he had told us that
hee would give himselfe
to us, and make over
him-

himselfe wholly to us, you shall have me, my body and blood; as in the Sacrament we are as verily partakers of the body, and blood of *Christ*, as we are of the bread, and wine: our soules have as much spirituall growth by *Christ*, and his benefits, as our bodyes have by the outward elements. He feeds us with himselfe, he esteemes, and prizeth our soules that are bought with his blood, so that he thinkes no food good enough but his own body & blood: what a gracious sweet love is this? Hee is both the Inviter and the Banquet, and all, he

he invites us to himselfe.

There is a lovelinesse likewise in all other Ordinances that belong to the Church; as in the good order, and government of the Church, in purging the Church of offenders, the discipline that is in the Church, which is as the snuffers in the Sanctuary to purge the lights; so that there should be a casting out of persons that are openly scandalous: the lights should be purged, the Temple should be cleansed, scandals should be remooved, that Gods house might be the more beautifull. They are blemishes

³
Church
discipline.

Simile.

mishes of Gods house, open swearers, and blasphemers, those that live in scandalous sinnes, they are spots in the Assembly, they are leaven, and this leaven should be purged out: and where there is the vigour of this, there is a great beauty of the Church, where these things are looked to as they should be, they are the bonds, and nerves, and sinewes that knit and tie a Church together; it makes a Church wondrous lovely, the neglect of which makes the Church as a garden overgrown. So you see how in respect of the Ordinances

nances of the Word, and
of the Sacrament, and
this government that
should be, that the house
of God, is a beautifull
place.

Then againe it is a
comfortable, a sweet and
delightfull thing, the
prayſes of God. It is a
marvellous sweet thing,
when all as one man heare
together, pray together,
ſing together Hymns, and
ſpirituall ſongs, and
prayſe God together, and
receive the Sacrament to-
gether, all as one man,
what a comely thing is
this to a ſpirituall eye?
Every Chriſtian hath a
beauty ſeuered in him-
ſelfe;

In the
joint ſer-
vice of
God.

selfe: but when all meet together, this is more excellent. As we say of the *Vialactea*, or Milky way in the heavens, (wee call it so) it is nothing but a deale of light from a company of little starres, that makes a glorious lustre: so if there be a beauty in every poore Christian, what a beauty is there when all meete together? A beauty, nay strength too; for the prayer, and the prayse of such, they offer a holy violence to God, they can obtaine any thing at his hands. We see burning glasses, when there is a confluence, and meeting

Simile.

ing of divers beames in
 one point, it strengthens the
 heate, and inflames a thing,
 so when there are many
 sweete desires meete toge-
 ther, many strong desires
 of spirituall things, they
 bind God, there is not onely
 beautie but strength in the
 prayers of the Church, they
 are in Christs owne esteeme
 comlineffe; hee loves to see
 his Church especially when
 they are together; *Let me see
 thy face, and heare thy voyce
 thou that hidest thy selfe,
 in the clefts of the rocke, Cant.*

Cant. 2.

2. Hee marvelously desires
 to see his children, and to
 heare them speake especial-
 ly when they present them-
 selves before him. Har-

H m ony

Compa-
ring of old
and new
testament.

mony is a sweet and pleasant thing, the comparing of the state of the Church, in former times with the present, is a harmonious thing, *David*, he lived vnder the old testament, and yet hee saw vnder that the new, so we should see the old in the new, compare them together, to see shaddowes in substances, types in truths, so that there is nothing in the Church, but it gives speciall delight.

In the evi-
dences of
Gods love.

Gods beauty likewise appeares (his gracious amiable sweet beauty) in his house, his Church in regard of the evidences of his loue that he beares to his Church, in protecting it, and providing for

for it, *They shall not need a wall, (saith he in Zecharie) I will be a wall of fire.* G O D hath a speciall care of his congregation, *God dwels in the congregation of the righteous.* He hath his dwelling his speciall residence there where his name is called on. This will appeare more if we see all the sweete priviledges and comforts, that are in the house of God, *God is not onely beautifull in himselfe: but in regard of the priviledges that the Church hath from him, for all our beautie and excellencie is borrowed, the church shines in the beames and beautie of Christ.* Now these priviledges that the

9.
Effectuall
calling.

Church hath by Christ (to
name a few) wee see in the
golden chayne of salvation,
what sweet amiable loue is
in all those linkes: as what
a wondrous sweet loue of
God is it to call men out of
the wildernesse of the
world out of the Kingdome
of Sathan to bee his chil-
dren! A marveilous loue to
singl vs out of the rest of
mankind to bee Christians,
and being Christians to bee
professors of the truth, and
being so to bee true profes-
sors of the truth. What a
wondrous loue of God,
was it to call vs, and there-
by to haue the eternall pur-
pose of God opened to us:
As when we are drawne to
God

God by his Spirit and by the ministerie, then the good pleasure of God, that was hid from eternity, is discovered to the soule: here is the amiable loue of God.

And then in the pardon, and forgivenesse of sinnes, and justification after: what a wondrous grace is that forgivenesse of sinnes, and adoption to be the sons and heirs of God, fellow heires with Iesus Christ, and ther-upon to haue Angels our attendants, what beauty haue we in justification to be cloathed with the righteousness of Christ; that perfect righteousness, that can answer the justice of

In justification.

92

H 3

God

— 87
1207 God much more Sathans cavills, and the troubles of our owne consciences: that that satisfieth the justice of God, being the righteousness of God man, it will satisfie conscience, and sathans temptations. It is a garment without spot. Sathan can picke no hole in that glorious garment, the righteousness of Christ. If wee have the wardrobe of Christ, we shall be beautiful in that wee have from Christ, we shall shine in his beames.

4
Sanctification. So goe to sanctification, how amiable is God, in the priviledge of sanctification, to set his image vpon us, to make vs new creatures, to be

bee like his sonne, that before were like the devils, full of malice and base affections. Now for God by his Spirit to frame a new Temple for his Spirit to dwell in to set his stampe vpon vs, what a wondrous beauty is this? The Church of God is the house where God frameth new creatures, there hee sets a stampe vpon his creatures.

The graces that belong to the Church of God are wondrous delight, *Wisdom makes a mans face to shine*, and there is no wisdome out of the Church, all is but darknesse and folly, so of all other graces whatsoever. Graces are the an-

H 4 nointing

nointing of the spirit, the oyle of the spirit, they make sweet, and delightfull, delightfull to God, and to the Church, and to one another. They are annointed with the oyle of gladnesse and of grace, it ran first up on Christs head, upon ~~A~~^{rons} head, but then upon the skirts, the meanest christian.

Joy and
comfort.

And so the beginning of glory here ; for all is not kept for the life to come, for God disti's some drops of glory before hand, wee see the beauty of God here, marvailously even in this world, in regard of the beginnings of glory. For upon justification, and the beginnings

nings of holinesse wrought
in our nature by the spirit,
we haue inward peace of
conscience, and ioy, and
comfort in all discomforts
whatsoever, wee haue not
onely the oyle of grace but
the oyle of comfort, Oh !
the comfort of the chil-
dren of God, that are mem-
bers of the church, that are
so in the church, that they
are of the church too, that
are of the church visible
so as they are of the church
invisibile, oh ! the comfort
that belongs to them, all the
comfort in Gods booke : so
you see the wondrous sweet
prerogatives and priviled-
ges we haue in all the passa-
ges of salvation in the house

H 5

of

In turning
all things
to good.

of God, and in God reconciled in Iesus Christ.

Nay God is so louely to those that are his, his church and people, he is so good to *Israel*, that he makes every thing good to them in the issue, *All things werke for the best to them that loue God*, in the issue, he makes a covenant betweene every thing, so that all the endeavours of Sathan and his instruments, all their plottings shall turne for the good of the church, when they thinke to doe most hurt, they doe most good, so sweet and good, and gracious is God,

Indeed glorious things are spoken of the people of
God

God. Take the church for
for a visible congregation,
a mixed congregation, glo-
rious things are spoken of
that, It is the house of God
(take it as visible) *the vessels*
of honour and dishonour, And
the field, the *Tares and the*
Wheat, it is Gods field,
though we take the church
as visible, it hath a glori-
ous name for the good that
is in it, specially for the
wheat. But take the church
of God for the company
of his children that are ga-
thered by the means dwel-
ling in the visible church,
enjoying the visible means
so they are the house & tem-
ple of Christ the *Temples of*
the Holy Ghost. the body of
Christ

Christ, the spouse of Christ, they are Gods delight, they are spirituall Kings and Priests, &c. The most glorious things that can bee, all other excellencies in the world are but tituler things, meere shaddows of things, there is some little rea'litie, but it is nothing in comparison, it is scarce worth the name of realitie, but *Salomon* calls them variety of vanities. In comparison of the excellencies of the Church all is nothing. I might be large in these particulars. It is enough to give you the generalls of the delights and excellencies of Gods house, *The beauty of the Lord.* We see amiableness of

of God in Christ, in his ordinances, the priviledges that we have in the ordinances, graces and comforts. Indeed the church of God, (beloved) is a Paradise, since wee were cast out of the first Paradise, this second Paradise is the church of God, and the third is heaven it selfe. This Paradise this church it is the seminarie of yong plants, that must be transplanted hence to heaven in due time. In Paradise there was the tree of life, in the church, there is the tree of life Christ, In Paradise there was waters, streames the rivers of Paradise so there is a river that makes glad the Citty of God,
streams

The
 Church a
 Paradise.

streames of grace, and comfort, that run through the Church of God.

Psal. i.

In the Church we are as plants by the rivers of waters that bring forth fruit in due season, as it is in *Psal. i.* speaking of blessed men that liue in the Church, *Blessed is the man that meditates in the word day and night, that attends upon the ordinances, he is planted as a tree by the waters side, his leaf is alway greene. What food to that food that is ministered to us in the word, and Sacraments, Christ himselfe to feed vs to life eternall. And what rayment to the rayment of justification, for Christ to cloath these poore souls*

soules of ours, poore naked beggerly soules? What riches to the riches, of Gods graces and comforts? what strength to that that is in the Church, to overcome our own corruptions and lusts? What beauty to the Image of God shining and stamped on his children? What company so sweet, as those that we meete with in the earth, in good exercises, and that we shall live ever with in heaven? What company to God the Father Son, and holy Ghost, and the Angels, that we enioy in the Church? What discourse so sweet, as that of God, hearing him speake in his word and us speaking to him by prayer

prayer, so that it is a resemblance of heaven upon earth the church of God.

To be in
love with
the beauty
of Gods
house.

Therefore we should be in love with the beauty of Gods Temple, and sanctuary. And the rather because all things now in this Age of the church wherein we live are in a more glorious manner then in *Dauids time*. *David* when he saw the beauty of Gods sanctuary, it was but in a shadow, and when he looked vpon the mercie-seate, then hee did thinke of Christ, the true propitiatorie, the true mercy-seate, when he looked on the high Priest, hee thought on Christ the true high priest, when he thought of

of *Canaan*, it put him in mind of heaven whereof *Canaan* was a type, when he saw the sacrifices, he thought of the true sacrifice for our sins, *Christ*; when he thought of the oblations and incense, he thought of the sacrifice of thankfulness: when he thought of the pasover, he thought of *Christ* the true Passeover, whose blood is sprinkled on our soules that the destroying Angell hath nothing to doe with us: he saw all in shadows, we see them naked So our condition is more glorious in this latter age of the church, then it was in *Dauids* time, therefore our desires should be more stirred

red up, for instead of the shadow we haue the substance, Then the spirit was but dropped, but the Father hath poured out the Spirit since Christs time. Then the pale of the Church was straitned, now it is enlarged, then there was but one Church the nationall Church of the Iewes. Then the service of God was wondrous burdensome, & chargeable, but it is not so now, so that there be many differences all things are more light-some, and cleare now then they were then, therefore having many things to commend the frequenting of the congregation more then *David* had in his time, wee should

should much more make
this one thing our desire to
dwell in the house of the
Lord, all the dayes of our
life to *behold the beauty of
the Lord.*

If this be so, that there
is such a beauty in the house
of God, then what shall we
thinke of those that see no
such beauty at all, that see
no such delight, and content
ment in the house of God.

I answer, it is a discovery
to them, if they would
thinke of it, that they have
no spirituall fences at all,
as Saint *Anstine* saith of men
that complaine, that they
doe not tast, and relish these
things : surely saith he, thou
wantest a spirituall palate to
tast

Quest.

Answ.
Carnall
men see
not this
beauty
why.
August.

cast these things. What doe
swine care for sweet mario-
raine or roses .? they care
more for a dunghill or a
puddle, what doe your base
filthy swine in mens shape,
care for these things, they
care more for pleasures, and
such things, that they may
spend their lives as beasts.
Now when wee speake of
the delights, and dainties,
and excellencies of Gods
house, wee speake to those
that we wish, and wee hope
haue spirituall senses an-
swerable to these things. E-
very creature delights in its
proper element: these things
are the element of a Christi-
an. Beetles delight in dirt,
and swine in myre, the fish,
in

In the sea, man hath his element here, and spirituall things are the element of a christian so farre as he is a christian, and that is his *ubi* the place that he delights in I speake to such, they can make it good in some measure, that *one day in the house of God, is better than a thousand else where*, that one houre in the unfolding the sweet misteries of salvation, it is worth twentie foure houres in other imployment, and they are so taken with the sweetness that they are content that *God* should take them out of the world, in the unfolding these of sweet things. When they heare the promises of
salvation

salvation opened though by a poore weake man, yet when it is in the ministry, it so ravisheth their hearts, that they are content to goe to heaven at the same time, it so convinceth them of the excellencie of Religion. I speake to such of the beauty of *God*.

True delight
where
in it consists,

Now *David* here, he desires to behold *Gods* beauty, to see or consider this excellencie of *God* in his church, for to true delight these things must concur. There must be something sweet in the thing it self. There must be a power in the soule to apprehend it. There must be an affection in the soule to that good thing, if the af-

fection

fection be flat, though there be never so beautifull, and sweete things, and a power to apprehend them, if there be not affection they are nothing, and then, upon the affection there must be complacencie, and contentment in the thing when we haue it. All these things are in delight from that that is beautifull and pleasant, *David* desired to see, he knew there was a beauty in the presence of *God* in his ordinances, and gifts, and graces, but hee desired to see and to contemplate these things that the faculties and powers of his soule, might be answerable to the things: that as they were excellent

Psal. 132.

Delight
comes of
sight

cellent so hee might haue
a power in his soule answer-
able. And then hee had af-
fections to carrie that pow-
er of his soule to the things,
One thing have I desired, and
then there was a complacen-
cy and delight in the things
(upō enioy^{ing}) answerable,
as we see how he expressed
his delight when he danced
before the Arke, wee see
what a Psaline hee made
when he did but purpose
to build the Temple, Psal. 132
he had a wondrous ioy, so
answerable to our delight is
our joy, and complacencie
in the thing when we have it.

Now that he might haue
the sweeter complacency
hee desired to see the beau-

ty

tie and the things in Gods house. Of all senses, sight hath this propertie above the rest, (as it is more spirituall, more refined, and more capable: a man may see many things at once, it is a quicke sense: so) it hath this priviledge it stirs affections more than any sense, more then hearing, that is a more dull sense: things stirre affections more that are scene, then by that we heare, hee desired therefore to see the beautie of Gods house that he might be enamoured. Of sight comes love.

David had spirituall eyes, and hee desired to feed his spirituall eie sight
I with

Property
of sight.

Happines
of man
what

with the best obieſt that could be, (for therein is the happines of man,) wherein ſtands a mans happines? When there is a concurrence of the moſt excellent obieſt, with the moſt excellent power, and facultie of the ſoule, with delight and content in it. Now he deſired to ſee the beauty of God, in his houſe, that his ſoule might be raviſhed in the excellency of the obieſt and that the higheſt powers of his ſoule, his underſtanding, will, and affections might be fully ſatiſfied, that he might have full contentment. Since the fall, all our happines, is out of our ſelves, it is derived

or

rived from *God*, in *Christ*,
 and it is taken out of the
 promises of *God* in the
 word: For *God* wil be seen
 in *Christ*, & *God* and *Christ*,
 wil be seen in the glasse of
 the ordinances til we come
 to heaven, and there we
 shal see face to face; so that
 now all our happines is
 fetched by looking on the
 loue of *God*, out of our
 selus, fetched out of the or-
 dināces. *David* desired to
 see the beauty of *God*. *Gods*
 loue is diffusive, it spreads
 & cōmunicates it selfe to
 his Church in the ordinan-
 ces, this he knowing, desi-
 red more and more, to cō-
 municate of this diffusive
 abundant transcendent loue
 of *God*. I 2 But

Happines
of man
what

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 his Church in the ordinan-
 ces, this he knowing, desi-
 red more and more, to cō-
 municate of this diffusiue
 abūdant transcendent loue
 of God. I 2 But

Quest.

But how shall we come to haue these desires that *David* had, to see the beauty of God.

7 Answ.

To see the beauty of God.

I.

Get a spirituall life.

In a word; we must haue spirituall sences, The spirituall life of a Christian, is furnished with spirituall sences, he hath a spirituall eye, and a spirituall tast to relish spirituall things, and a spirituall eare, to judge of holy things, and a spirituall feeling. As every life, so this excellent life, hath sences, and motion futable to it. Now we should labour to haue this spirituall life quickned in us, that we may haue a quicke sight of heavenly things, and a taste of heavenly

venly things, that we may
smell the oyntment of
Christ, *For the sweetnesse of
thy ointments the virgins
run after thee.* The soule
high senses answerable to
the bodie, let us desire
God to cleanse all our sen-
ces, and to reveale him-
selfe in Christ more, and
more in the ordinances.

37
Beg the spi-
rit of reve-
lation.

This Saint Paul cal-
leth the *Spirit of re-
velation*, Let us pray to
God that in his ordinances
he would discover that a-
miable loue of his in
Christ, to shine on us in
the face of his Sonne, in
his ordinances, for the
Spirit must helpe us to see
the beauty of God when
I 3 his

wee haue spirituall senses, except the spirit giue us a spirituall light to see, we cannot see, therefore let us desire that *God* would give us spirituall senses, to the spirituall light.

When *God* made the world, light was the first creature, Why? that all the excellency of the creatures, might be discerned by light, If *God* had made never so many excellent creatures, if the light had not discovered them, where had beene his glory? So there are many excellent, beautiful things in *CHRIST*, wonderful grace, and comfort, if these

these bee discovered in the word and we haue no senses, and no light, if there bee not light in the vnderstanding, *God* shall want his glory, and we the comfort.

It is light that makes things that are beautiful, to bee beautiful to us. A blind man cannot judge of colours, nor a deafe man of sounds, and harmony. A man that hath lost his tast cannot judge of sweetnesse, so that there must be senses, and the spirit of *GOD* must reveale these things vnto us.

And likewise let vs labour more and more to

3.
To see our
own defor-
mity

Up

see our owne deformity
and then we shall see *Christs*
beauty, the more wee
desire to know our owne
vilenesse. Indeed the spirit
of *God* carries these para-
lell one with another, he
discovers by the same light
our owne deformity, ~~and~~
and necessitie, and the
beautie, and excellencie
of *G O D* in *Iesus Christ*,
the one will set an edge
on the other, and he that
wil come to see the height
and breadth, and depth of
G O D S loue in *Christ*,
must see the height, and
breadth, and depth of his
owne corruption, and our
miserie by it out of *Christ*
And they are good
thoughts

thoughts for us, every day to thinke of these two objects, the miserie of the condition of man out of Christ, and the excellencie now, that wee haue in Iesus Christ: the amiablenesse of *Christ*, towards us, and our amiable condition in him, he delights in us, as we delight in him, the consideration of this, and of the loathsome, terrible, fearefull condition out of him, will keepe vs closer to Christ, and make us value the ordinances more that we may grow vp in faith, and knowledge of Christ more & more til we come to a fulnesse in Christ.

And present to the eye

I 5

of

10442
f 2 e 7

4
To consider Christ's
relations to
us.

v. 5.

of our soules, *G O D* in *Christ* in the relations he hath taken upon him, to be a father in *Christ*, let us make that benefit of this beauty that is presented to vs in the Gospel, especially when it is vnfolded in the ministerie, because *Sathan* hath a speciall policie to present *God*, and *Christ* otherwise to use especially in the time of temptation, he presents *God* as a iudge sitting upon his throne, and *God* as a consuming fire. It is true, he is so out of *Christ*, but in him he hath taken the relation of a father, and looketh on vs sweetly in the relation of sonnes. *Christ* must

must be considered in the
sweet relation of a saviour
and the holy ghost in the
sweete relation of a com-
forter, and the word is all
written for our comfort, if
we beleue, and the sacra-
ments feed vs to eternall
life. Let us represent these
things beautifully to the
soule, and this will streng-
then faith, and cherish af-
fection, that Satan shall
not rob vs of our com-
fort, nor say to us, what
doe you, ye uncleane per-
sons, loathsome creatures
what doe you come to the
Sacrament, and come to
the holy things of GOD:
It is true, if we meane to
be so still, but as soone as
ever

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Revel. 3.

ever the desire of our
 soules is to come to GOD,
 and that there is a divorce
 betweene vs, and our sins,
 and we desire to leaue them
 let us haue all the sweete
 conceits of God that may
 bee; wee see in *Revel. 3.*
Laodicea was luke-warme
 and that is a hatefull tem-
 per, *Behold* (saith hee,) *I*
stand and knocke, if any man
open to me I will come, and
sup with them. A strange
 loue, to come to them that
 were in such a luke-warme
 estate, he was ready to cast
 them out, his stomacke
 was loaden with them, *I*
stand at the doore and knock
ye, if any of you, luke-
warme professors, will o-
 pen

pen I will come and sup
with him, and refresh him
with the refreshings of
God. So in *Cant. 5.* when
the Church slighted *Christ*
and offended him: yet he
wooos his Church. *My
locks are wet with the
dew of the night.* Oh! mar-
vellous patience that not-
withstanding her luke-
warmenesse, and neglect
yet *Christ* gives not over.
Let us not entertaine hard
conceits of God and *Christ*
but labour to present
them sweetly to our medi-
tations.

Cant. 5.

This is the wisdom of
a Christian to haue fights
of faith, that is, to present
severall things that faith
may

Wax

AYLAX
E:

may worke on to strengthen it selfe, as for Faith to haue a sight of God in Christ, a gracious Father and to haue a spirituall sight of Christ sending ambassadors wooing and beseeching us to be reconciled: and a sight of the ioies of heaue, that we shal have full possession of after: let vs thinke of them, and present them to our soules; and present to our soules by meditation, the excellencie, and royaltie, and prerogative of Gods Children, that they are the most excellent people in the world. These sights that faith helps it selfe by are an excellent meanes to make

make us in loue with the beauty of Gods house. But to answer two or 3. objections briefly before I proceed to more particulars.

Some will object, what need we now in these glorious times of the Church stand vpon the ordinances so much? Indeed in darker times there was more need, &c.

I will not be large, but to answer in a word. The more God discovers himselfe, and his excellent things here, the more we should expresse our thankfulness in labouring to grow in knowledge, for there is such a breadth in them

Obiect.

Answ.
Necessitie
of the ordi-
nances con-
tinually.

them, that we can never have enough of them, and there is such a daily exigence of spirituall things, of comforts, and graces that are all conveyed in the use of meanes, that a christian cannot be without them, he can no more bee without the use of the Ordinances, then he can without his daily food.

Obiect.

Oh! But what need we be so eager, and earnest after these things as some are? is not now and then enough?

Ans.

Are we better then David see how earnest he was *Psal.* 84 and *Psal.* 42. *As the Hart panteth after the rivers of water, so my soule thirsteth after thee, O God: For there is*

psal. 82,
psal. 44,
Psal. 42,

a presence of God, in his ordinances, that other men are not sensible of, there is a presence to their spirits, that they feele that they marveilously loue, and are affected with. And if they want the presence of God (as *David* here) they are wondrously discouraged. As good *Nehemiah* when he heard it went not wel with the Church, he grew sad : And *David* we see how he takes it here when he was banished as it were from the house, and ordinances of God. But I wil not stand long upon these obiections

Some thinke they may as wel read at home, good bookes, and sermons, and not

Obiect.

Answ.

Private du-
ties must
give way to
publike,

not come to the ordinances.

But *David* loved the ordinances, he loved the place; might not he thinke of what he heard before, might not he have help of the prophets? Oh! but there is a blessing in the very meeting, *Where two or three are met together, I will be in the midst of them. And Christ walkes in the midst of the Golden Candle-sticks.* There is a more powerfull gracious presence in the very assemblies of Gods people, percase thou mayst doe much good in private with contempt of the publike ordinance, it is a cursed studie :

die : like *Mannah* that did *Simile.*
stinke when it was gathered out of season, when it was gathered when it should not, it putrified : There is a curse vpon that studie, and vpon that knowledge that wee get when we should attend vpon the publik meanes. For it is not knowledge that will bring to heaven, for the Devill hath that, but it is knowledg sanctified, seizing vpon the affections, now what is it that maketh us good ? The spirit working with the ordinance : and will the spirit worke, when wee neglect the ordinance ? It is but a pretence, they spend their
time

time otherwise, it is to be feared not so well. But put the case they should, there never comes good of it. It may enrich them in knowledge, to grow more divelish, but more holy they cannot be, for holinesse comes from the spirit, and the spirit will worke by his owne ordinances, so much for that and of all other objections in regard of the beauty of God.

Obiect.

I will not raise any objections, but only answer those that commonly popish spirits trouble some with all. I will answer, I say some of them briefly. They trouble vs about
OUT

our Churches. Indeed if your particular Churches were Churches of God, if you could make that good, then you might delight in them, but you are Hereticks, and Schismatics, your Churches are not good Churches. Thus they trouble good Christians that are of the simpler sort: especially with this, where was your Church a hundred years agoe, before *Luthers* time? your Church is an vpstart, and your congregations are nothing but a meeting of a company of hereticks together.

Beloved that that makes a Church to be a catho-like

Answ.

like Church, to bee a branch of the Catholike Church which we beleive in the Creed, it is the Catholike faith, the faith, and truth that is the seed of the Church, it is begotten of the word of God, where-soever the word the Catholike truth of God is there is the Church, a branch of the Catholike Church. Now our faith that we beleeeve hath consanguinity with the first Churches: for what doe we beleeeve, but it is fetched out of the Testament, and from the primitive Church? And indeed in their owne confession if they would bee modest, that

that might be extorted
from them that we are
more Catholike, and our
Doctrine is more catho-
like then theirs. Why ?
For that that agrees with
the ancient truth, *and faith*
once given, as Saint *Iude*
saith, it runns through all
ages: and that wherein we
agree with them, is more
agreeable, and Catholike
then that they hold seve-
red from us. It is more
catholike in regard of all
times, before Christ, and
in Christs time, and in the
Apostles times, and that
that the Papists them-
selues hold with us, is
more Catholike, then that
they hold seuered. Now
wherein

papists er-
rour in ad-
dition.

they differ from us, and we account them heretiks they differ from the scriptures, and from the church six hundred yeares after Christ, and many of them are of late standing. Therefore in those tenents of ours we agree with the Papists, and with the Primitive Church, what doe we hold but they hold? but they adde traditions that are pernicious, wee hold the scriptures, ~~they~~ they hold that and traditions too: we hold two sacraments, they adde five more: we hold Christ to bee the Mediator, they make Saints Mediators too; whatsoever we hold they

they hold, but they adde
their owne patcheries to
them: therefore our do-
ctrine is more catholick
because we have the evi-
dence of Scripture for all
ours; and we have them
to justifie ours, and where-
in they differ from us,
they have neyther Scirp-
ture nor antiquitie, but
they are onely a compa-
ny, a masse of things of
their owne; but I wil not
bee much in this point.
And then say they where
was your Church before
Luthers time, and 200.
yeares agone? Where
was it? Where their
Church was; our Church
was amongst them, in the

K

mid.

middest of them: witnesse
their fire and inquisition;
and persecution: they
found out our Church
well enough.

But to make it a little
clearer. The Church of
God, take it in generall
for good, and bad in it:
and for the meanes of sal-
vation that they had in
some measure, it may be
called a kinde of visible
Church though very cor-
ruptly; and so considered,
our Church those that
professed our Religion,
was the best of that
Church, in the declining
times of it. As in a lumpe
of Gold that is not yet re-
fined to bulloine there is
gold

gold, and a great deale of
earth: take it in the whole
wee say it is Gold: but
when it is refined to bul-
loine, we say it is gold se-
vered. Now our Church
in the midst of Popery
was as gold in the midst
of earth unrefined, that is,
there was many Romish
Churches, and ours was
in the midst of them,
the Temple in the midst
of the Court, that is, the
true Church in the visible
Church. There were a
great company that held
the tenents of the Gos-
pel, especially at the
hours of death, that
denied Popery: But
then there were some
K 2 that

that were refined as *Bul-
lein* after, as the *Walden-
sis* that were a severed
company of people, be-
sides other holy men, and
women that grew up by
hearing somewhat of
Christ in their Sermons,
and somewhat in the Sa-
crament, they left out that
that was bad, and tooke
that that was good; be-
sides the lumpe of Gold,
there was some refined
Gold, when pope ie was
in its perfection, and those
they termed *Waldensis*,
and the like. There was
alway a company that
held the truth against
them, (I am sorry to men-
tion these things, in a
point

point tending more to
edification) Our Churches
therefore are refined
Churches, that is,
Gold singled out of the
drosse of popery, they
are a corrupt, and our
Church a refined, a visi-
ble Congregation.

Now to cut off these
objections, to come nea-
rer to our selves to make
good our particular Con-
gregations, and to shew
that of necessitie we ought
to frequent them, and to
take heede of all objecti-
ons that the devill and the
flesh may make to bring
us out of love with our
particular Congregati-
ons, know therefore these

There
hath beene
alway a
Church.

three or foure rules in a word.

First, that there hath beene a Church from the beginning of the world, where God hath beene worshipped. Christ is a King, and he must have a kingdome: to beleeeve A Catholick Church is an Article of our Faith, and there cannot bee an act without an object. I have faith, I beleeeve a visible Church, therefore there must bee a Church. So that there hath beene a Church from the beginning of the world, it is an article of our Faith.

Marks of
the true
Church,

Secondly, the markes whereby this Church is knowne

knowne is especially the truth of God, that is the seede of the Church, the truth of God discovered by his Word and ordinance. To which is annexed the Sacraments, and Ecclesiasticall government, but the former most necessary. And these three were typified in the Arke: for there was the Law signifying the word, and the pot of Mannah, signifying the Sacrament, and the Rod to shew the discipline; those three were as it were types of the three markes of the Church; but especially the Word, for that is the seede of the new birth.

K 4

birth. Wheresoever the Word hath beene published, and there hath bin an order of teachers, and people submitting themselves, there is a Church, though perhaps there might be some weaknesse in other regards. A man is a man though hee want the ornaments of a man; and a citie without walls is a citie; put case there might be some weakenesse in some things, yet as long as the vitalls of the Church remaine it is a Church.

3.
Abuse of
things takes
not away
their use.

The third thing that I observe (to cleare this point, to hasten to things of more edification) is
this,

this, abuse takes not away
the use ; a neglectfull use
or abuse takes not away
the true use of things ; put
case the Scripture be abu-
sed many wayes, that the
Sacraments have many
additions, that these things
are not so pure ; yet it takes
not away the just use : for
then wee take away the
cause of things. Then the
conclusion of all is this,
that of necessitie, notwith-
standing somewhat may
be found fault with in all
visible Churches ; some
errours there may be, yet
wee ought to cleave to a
visible Church, because it
hath beene alway, and we
ought to know it by

these markes, if the word of God bee taught there, then of necessitie we must cleave to it, *God added to the Church such as should be saved*, to the visible Church. Those that are saved must bee saved in submission to the visible Church. But these things I list not to bee large in; this may give satisfaction.

Vse.

What estate they are in that are cast out of the Church.

If this be so that wee ought to submit to the ordinance of God in the visible Church, to come into the Arke (as it were) the visible Church is called the Arke, or else wee must be drowned and perish; what shall we think then

then of those that are
cast out of the Church
by excommunication ?
(but that is for their
good) but their case is ve-
ry ill, because they are
cut off from the house
and beautie of God, their
case is miserable. But it
is worse with those that
depart out of themselves
as Apostates, &c. Some
are cast out, some are A-
postates and goe out ;
they fall away from the
Church of God to the ro-
mish strumpet, to *Babylon*;
being dazeled with the
pompe of that Church,
not seeing the spirituall
beautie of the ordinances
of God with us. What
thinke

thinke wee of those that ought to joyne with visible Congregations, that excommunicate themselves willingly, such as schismaticks, and such prophane separatists, that when they may will not, partly because they will not have their consciences awaked, and partly because they will give libertie to the flesh to other things at that time. Some are cast out, and some goe out, some excommunicate themselves. They are of the disposition of the devills that will not bee tormented before their time; they thinke they shall heare somewhat that will

will awake their conscience, and they are very unwilling to have conscience awaked, but they will have all their torment at once. All these are in a wofull condition. if the gracious presence of God be in the Church above all other places in the world (as we see *David* desired to dwell in the house of God, that hee might see the beautie of God) if there be a beautie in the divine ordinances. How miserable are those that are cast out, or that goe out! that rent themselves from the Church, or willingly excommunicate themselves like

like wilde creatures: They are worse then *Caine*, hee grieved when hee was to depart the presence of God, he fell into a desperate temper; they are worsethen he, that when they have the liberty of the ordinances of God, they goe on in a wilde licentious course, and neglect all meanes that God hath sanctified to bring them to heaven.

Vse 2.
Tryall of
our love to
the beaurie
of Gods
house.

But to come nearer, to make an use of tryall, how shall wee know whether we have benifite by, and whether wee be truly in love with the beauty of Gods house or no? because many come hither,

ther : as in *Noahs* Arke
there were beasts that
were cleane, and uncleane;
so there are many that
come to the visible con-
gregations, they are in the
Church (as excrements
are in the body) but they
are not of it.

To know therefore
whether we come to pur-
pose, and heartily love
the beauty of God in his
ordinances, and comforts
and graces, as *David* did
here or no. Wee may
know it easily, for sight
(as I sayd before) it
workes affection, we may
know by our affection.
whether we see the excel-
lency of God or no. in his
ordi-

1.
Sight stirs
affection.

ordinances, there is no
sence that stirres up affe-
ction answerable to sight,
the affection of love espe-
cially.

Tryall of
love.

How shall wee know
that we love the ordinan-
ces of God?

That is an affection that
of all other is least to bee
concealed; what we love
wee will boldly professe,
wee will joy and delight
in it if wee have it. You
see how *David* joyed in
the ordinance of God,
how he danced before the
Arke, there was no joy
that hee had comparable,
hee preferred it before all
other joy that hee had
whatsoever, it was a tran-
scen-

fcendent joy. And what
wee love and delight in
wee meditate much on,
Oh how I love thy Law!
my meditation is on it con-
tinually, our mindes will
runne on it. Therefore
we are exhorted to thinke
of the word of God, to
have it before our eyes, to
have it written before us
in our courses, that wee
may meditate upon it, at
home and abroad, *Moses*
hee gave those helpes:
wherethere is love, there
is meditation: those that
love the good things
of God, their mindes
will be often on them.

Againe there will bee
zeale for the holy things
of

Zeale,

of God, a man will not indure them to be disgraced, but hee will have a good word to speake in the defence of Gods ordinances, of holy things and Religion. Those that suffer Religion to be betrayed in the company of base carnall people they have never seene, the beauty of Gods house, that have not a word to say; those that have seene Gods beauty, and felt the comfort of the delights of Gods house, they are able to justifie it against all opposers whatsoever, that there is good to bee taken and done there: by their owne experience

perience, by the comfort they have felt; they will bee able to tell others what the Lord hath done for their soules, and in their soules, what graces they have beene strengthened in, what comfort they have felt; they can discover this, and can iustifie all the ordinances of God from their owne experience. Doe not wee see daily under the ordinance of God by weak men, the blinde see, the spiritually deafe heare, the spiritually dumbe be able to speake, to pray to God: the dead, those that are dead in sinne, they receive life? doe not all these

these justifie the excellencie of Gods ordinance which gives spirituall life, and spirituall senses? Those therefore that have beene dead in former time in sinfull courses, and have found the power of Gods Spirit with his ordinance, they are able to justifie it: those that are not able to justifie these things by some experience they never felt any good by them. By these and the like evidences, we may try the truth of our affection, whether wee have seene this beauty or no to purpose.

Quest.

If wee finde that wee have little comfort, and
strength

strength by the Word of God, that wee have not seene the beauty of it, what shall we doe, what course shall we take?

Waite still, waite still at the poole for the Angels stirring, for God at length will discover his power by his Spirit, hee will discover his goodnesse if not at the first, yet at length, therefore let us use all sanctified meanes: And know this for a rule, that Gods Spirit is an excellent worker, hee will onely worke by his owne instruments.

And come to the ordinances with a Spirit of Faith, because they are Gods

Answ.

How to come to see this beautie,

1.

Use Gods meanes.

2.

Come in Faith,

Gods ordinances. God will discover himselfe in some excellencie or other, hee will discover some comfort and grace, somewhat that is usefull to our soules to build us up to eternall life, let us come with a particular faith that hee will doe so. Faith must answer Gods promise, God hath promised *where two or three are met together in his name he will be in the midst of them.* Hee hath made a promise to blesse all his ordinances: Therefore let our particular faith answer Gods ordinance. Lord I goe to thy house to heare thy Word,
to

to receive thy Sacrament
in thy feare, in reverence
of thy majestie, and in a
spirit of Faith I expect
thee to make good thy
owne ordinance; this
brings a mervalous effica-
cie with it. If wee goe
with a particular faith
know that God will bee
as good as his word. This
course wee must take to
see the beautie of the
Lord.

And then (as I sayd
before) often let our
thoughts bee upon these
spirituall excellencies, let
us ballance and weigh
things in our thoughts.
Love comes from judge-
ment, love comes from
an

3.
Compare
these ex-
cellencies
with other
things.

an esteeme of things, of the goodnesse of things, and that comes from a right judgement; let us therefore labour to have a right judgement of things to be as they are. *Solomon* was the wisest man (next to him that was God man) that ever was, and hee knew what Spirituall things were, & what all other things in the world were, and what verdict doth he give? This is the *whole man*, to feare God and keepe his Commandements. And how doth he commend wisdom in *Prov. 8.* all precious things are nothing in comparifon of the wise-

Prov. 8.

wisedom of Gods Word.
But what saith he of other
things? hee that had run
through all things by ex-
perience, and thought to
extract the quintessence
of all that the creature
could give, he saith they
were but *vanitie and vex-*
ation of Spirit, trust my
experience. Therefore let
us bee able to lay in the
ballance, the good that
we get or may get by the
blessed ordinances of
God, with other things
whatsoever: Oh the beau-
tie and excellencie of spi-
rituall things, it is above
all other beautie whatso-
ever. Alas, what is out-
ward beautie? it is but a

L

lumpe

lumps of well coloured
 earth. What is gold, and
 all the lustre of it? It is
 but earth refined. And
 what are all honours, and
 goodly delights that way?
 it is but as a puffe of
 smoake, it is nothing, in
 one word, it is vanitie, and
 experience proves this
 every day: Oh, but the
Word of the Lord endureth
forever, that is, the com-
 forts, and the priviledges
 that we have by the word
 of God they indure for
 ever; and then more espe-
 cially the comfort of
 them when outward com-
 forts faile most: even up-
 on our death bed, when
 conscience is awaked
 then

v. 28

then, and hath presented to it the former life, and the guilt of many sinnes, what will comfort a man then? his goodly apparrell, or his goodly feature, or his great place and honour? (perhaps these will increase his griefe as they have beene instruments of sinne) Oh no, th's will doe him good, such a comfort I heard in such a Sermon, such good things I heard read, and such good things come to my minde, such experience I have of Gods Spirit working at such and such a time; these will testifie that Gods Spirit went with his ordinance to fa-

sten somewhat on my
soule, and they will com
fort when nothing else
will.

Let us oft compare all
other things with the
beautie of God, and his
ordinances, as if all were
nothing to them: thus ho-
ly *Moses*, he saw a beauty
and a glory in the despi-
sed people of God that
made Brick; he saw they
were the people that God
set his delight on, and
that the Church of God
was there, when hee saw
that, he despised all the
glory of *Pharaohs* Court,
and accounted the worst
thing in Religion, the re-
proach and shame better
then

then all the pleasures of
sinne. Beloved, the bit-
terest things in the ordi-
nance of God are better
then any worldly thing.
What is the bitterest
thing in the ordinance of
God? Reproofes, they
are as precious balme. If
the ordinance of God
meete with our particular
sinnes, and tell us, and
discover to us what an
enemy it is, that it will
be the bane of our soules
if we live in it, and it send
us away to looke to our
selves, this will bee as a
precious balme, our soules
will come to be saved by
it. And if for Religion
wee suffer reproach, and

L 3 shame,

shame, it will bee as a crowne, as holy *Moses* accounted the reproach of Christ, better then the treasures of *Egypt*. If the worst and bitterest things in Gods ordinance be so sweete, what are the best things of all? the comforts of Religion? what is the peace of conscience and joy in the holy Ghost? and eternall glory in heaven? what are the excellencies of Religion, when the shame and disgrace are to be preferred before all other things whatsoever?

So blessed Saint *Paul*, he weighed things after this fashion; he was an excellent

lent man and had excellent priviledges to glory in, Oh but saith he, I account all dung, and drosse in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ that hee had. Our blessed Saviour that was the most able of all to judge, hee would have all *sold for the pearle*, that is, for the field where the pearle is, to buy that, to get the ordinances of God, hee accounts him a wise man that will sell all for that. And when *Martha* and *Mary* entertained him; *Mary* sate at his feete to heare him expound the truth of God, *shee chose*
L 4 the

the better part saith Christ. If we will beleeve him in whom all the treasures of wisdom are, in his judgement *Mary chose the better part, one thing is necessary* saith he, he justified *Dauid's choise one thing have I desired*, and saith Christ *one thing is necessary*; all things in comparison of that are not necessary, they may well enough be spared. Thus we see how wee may come to love God in his ordinances, and to see the *beautie of holinesse*, the beauty of God in his sanctuary.

And because there are two things needfull to see a beautie, an object

re-

revealed, and a sight; Let us desire God to reveale himselfe in his ordinances to us more and more, and desire him to give us spirituall eyes more and more to see him. Sometimes hee hides himselfe in his ordinances, that we cannot see the beautie of things; let us therefore desire him to reveale himselfe, to take away that vayle that is betweene us, and holy things, and betweene us and grace, and comfort, that hee would take away that spirituall vayle, and reveale himselfe to us, and shine on us in Christ, that hee would manifest his love

L 5

to

4.
Desire God
to reveale
himselfe in
his ordi-
nances.

V. V.

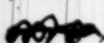
to us, and give us spiritu-
all eyes to see him.

Prayer is an excellent
meanes before wee come:
and when wee are there,
and oft in attending on
the ordinances, let us lift
up our hearts to God to
reveale his truths to us.

There are many vailles
betweene us, and holy
things, let us desire God
to take them all away (of
errour, and ignorance, and
unbeliefe,) and to shine so
clearly to us by his Spi-
rit, that wee may see him
more clearly. And ob-
jects have a speciall in-
fluence when they are
clearly discerned. Now
a man may more clearly
see

see and feele God at peace
with him by the Spirit,
and clearely see and feele
the comfort of forgive-
nesse of sinnes and of any
promise that is unfolded,
and it hath a merveilous
influence upon the affecti-
ons, to comfort and to
breed peace and joy. And
that is one signe that wee
profit by the ordinance
of God, when it is so with
us; when we finde an in-
fluence from the things
(upon our daily prayers)
to worke peace and com-
fort, and spiritual strength
against temptations, and
corruptions. All in the
ordinance is by the power
of the Spirit: therefore
we

wee are to pray to God that hee would joyne his holy Spirit, that he would reveale his secrets to us, and with revelation work an influence into our soules, that there may be a distilling of grace and comfort through the ordinances to our soules. Prayer must accompany the ordinances, because the ordinance of it selfe is an emptie thing unlessse the Spirit accompany it.


 Motives to
 labour to.
 see the
 beauty of
 God.

To stirre us up a little to this, more and more to see the beautie of God in his ordinances, to see the glory of God as the Scripture speakes. (Indeede
 God

God is not onely delightfull, and beautifull, but glorious in his ordinances. And the Arke is called the glory of God, and the knowledge of God in Christ it is a glorious knowledge, and the Gospell is called a glorious Gospell) this will onely make us truly glorious, these things they put a glory upon our soules; Saint *Paul* calls it the glorious grace. What a glorious thing is it when by the ordinance of God a weake man shall have power against the strong devill? against all the gates of hell? when a poore creature, *flesh and blood*

r.
It makes
us glorious.

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x2 = v.

blood, by some vertue distilled through the ordinance by the Spirit of God shall have such a strong faith in the promise of forgiveness of sinnes, such a faith in the promise that all shall turne to his good, that God is reconciled to him in Christ, that all the gates of hell shall not prevaile over a weake soule? And what a glorious grace is this when by the use, and attendance upon the ordinance of God, a poore soule shall have strength over these corruptions and sinnes that others are slaves to, and cannot get the victory over

over? that when they see the spirituall beautie in Gods ordinances they grow out of taste with all ~~other things~~ that others are besotted with, that are of more excellent naturall parts then they? what a glory of grace is this? Therefore let us with all feare and reverence attend upon the ordinances of God, that God may bee glorious in us by his Spirit, and strengthen us against Satan and our beloved corruptions.

And let us know what our soules were made for: what are our soules more for, then to dwell in the meditation of the beauty of

2.
Our soules
are made
for these
things.

172 (12) of God? what are our
soules made for, but for
excellent things? and
what is excellent but in
Gods ordinances? Is
the soule made to study
debates and jarres be-
tweene man and man in
our particular callings?
'sthe soule made to get a
little wealth that we shall
leave perhaps to an un-
thrifit generation after?
Are our soules that are
the most excellent things
under heaven (the world
is not worth a soule, they
are the price of the blood
of the sonne of God, in
his judgement the world
is not worth a soule) are
they for these things?

No,

No, they are for union, and communion with God in his ordinances, to grow in nearer communion with God by his Spirit, to have more knowledge and affection, more love and joy, and delight in the best things daily; our soules are for these things that will make us gracious here and glorious for ever after in heaven.

It is a great deordination, when wee study and care onely for earthly things, and have slight conceits of those things that are incomparably the best things, in the judgement of God and of Christ

Christ himselfe, and of *Solomon*, and of all good men.

3.
Least God
remoove
them.

And the rather let us bee stirred up to affect these things, least God depart from us. The glory of God departed out the temple before the destruction of *Ierusalem*; so the glory of God, that is, a visible signe of his glory, it departs from a Church, the beautie and excellencie of God departs when wee esteeme them not. And if any thing in the world make God to leave a Church as he left the Jewes, and as he may leave any particular Church (hee will alway

way have a Catholicke Church in the world; but hee^{is} not tyed to *England* or *France*, or any countrey, if any thing moove him to this) it is because there is not a prizing of the heavenly things wee have, of the blessed libertie wee have, to meeete God in his ordinances, that we have not a care to improve these ordinances, to get grace and comfort against the evill day. For however wee esteeme these things, God sets a high prize on them; and if wee doe not God will deprive us of them, or of the power and beautie of them. Therefore

fore as we desire God to
 continue his ordinances,
 and his blessing, and pow
 er in his ordinances, let
 us improve them the best
 way to get grace and com-
 fort. Hee hath made a
 great progresse in Reli-
 gion, that hath gotten a
 high esteeme, and a san-
 ctified judgement of the
 best things, though per-
 haps hee finde himsele
 dull, and dead, and com-
 plain of it; yet when God
 shines so farre that hee is
 able to approve, and to
 justifie the best things, that
 they touch his affections
 so much, that the bent of
 his soule is that way, and
 hee cannot be long with-
 out

out them, and hee findes
much comfort by them,
though it be joyned with
much corruption; these
things argue a good tem-
per and frame of soule.

And of all other dispo-
sitions of soule, let us pre-
serve that spirituall dispo-
sition of soule, whereby
our soule is fitted to the
things themselves, the
things of Gods Spirit are
holy and excellent, when
there is such a taste, and
relish wrought in the
soule suitable to the things.
There is a happy combi-
nation then, we may know
there is a powerfull worke
of the things upon the
soule, for all grace
wrought

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wrought

wrought by the things of God; wee may know it, when the soule hath a suitable relish of them, and longs after them, and delights in them, and improves them to the best, and such a soule never wants evidence of a good Christian. Aske a Christian what is the best evidence of salvation, & that you belong to God? *My sheepe heare my voyce, saith Christ, and as children new borne desire the sincere milke of the Word that yee may grow thereby:* a man may know hee is a true child of the Church if hee desire the sincere milke of the Word, to grow better
and

and more holy and comfortable; if hee delight in the voyce of God in the ministry, and so be affected to the truth, and ordinances of God, it is a comfortable character of a good Christian. There are more hidden evidences sometimes, but this for an ordinary evidence is a good one, and comfortable. *David* merveilously comforted himselfe with this, *Oh! how doe I love thy Law*; Oh! that wee could say as hee did, *Oh how doe I love thy Law, and love thy truth*, that wee could wonder at our owne affections, that wee could delight in this
beautie

of God, as *David* saith
 here, *one thing have I de-
 sired of the Lord, and that
 will I seeke after, that I
 may dwell in the house of
 the Lord all the dayes of
 my life to behold the
 beauty of the
 Lord, &c.*

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